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Your essential daily news | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2016 | High 2°C/Low -4°C Partly cloudy

ISTOCK

DON'T CALL IT 'ROAD RAGE'

City psychologist gives her take on recent violence **metroNEWS**

Thief cracks into mailboxes like an advent calendar

CHRISTMAS CRIME

Airdrie woman warns public after her gifts get plundered

Josie Lukey
For Metro | Calgary

The Grinch came early for one Airdrie woman who had her packages stolen from a Canada Post mailbox.

On Dec. 8, Teresa's husband came home from the mailbox empty-handed after receiving a key to open a package mailslot and noticing his packages weren't there. It was then he noticed a number of other mailslot doors in the Airdrie neighbourhood of Coopers Crossing were open with nothing inside.

"I don't know why people break into them, there's really nothing of value to them in there. They're just personal Christmas gifts," said Teresa, who declined to give her last name.

"We take security of the mail very seriously and do everything possible to assist law enforcement in tracking down criminals," said Phil Legault of Canada Post. "We encourage our customers to report any suspicious activities in the area to police or Canada Post."

Legault couldn't comment on the Coopers Crossing incident specifically because it's under investigation.

Luckily, Teresa contacted the vendors and Canada Post immediately after the incident and was able to get one package replaced — with the other pending.

She recommends people make sure to pick up their mail regularly to avoid being a victim.

Although she's glad the packages weren't of higher value, Teresa admits the whole incident's been frustrating.

"It's time I don't have at this time of year," said Teresa.

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

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Cycle track set for 2017 tune up

The downtown pilot has been approved, and that means over the next year the plan will be tweaked to improve the network's infrastructure, with designs and consultations to begin in the new year.

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

So, the downtown cycle track network pilot was finished, and the remaining protected lanes are to be permanent.

Now what?

Well, the city has $1.65 million left to improve the network in some key sore spots, which include parking and loading.

Although 2017 might be a tight squeeze for any changes on the current network, bike boss Tom Thivener said the city has already identified a number of improvements they will begin planning for in 2017, and potentially implementing over the next two years.

> **The public has demanded the connection go further.**
> Tom Thivener

But because the cycle track network is no longer a pilot, the team can concentrate on implementing improvements instead of keeping up with the onslaught of data they were collecting during the bike lane trial.

"We have to do some tweaks," Mayor Naheed Nenshi said.

The curved jogs, which Coun. Gian-Carlo Carra aptly dubbed "wiggles" during the city's meeting on Monday, will need to be straightened out. But Thivener said they might change in conjunction with the Green Line plan implications.

Nenshi called the "wiggles" irritating, and said the city needs to fix them to put more through lanes of traffic.

"We know we need to do a few things on 12 Avenue," said Thivener. "The public has demanded the connection go further into the community, into Sunalta."

It's unclear how the Green Line needs will affect 12 Avenue, but once that's known the city may rejig that part of the network, which could mean changes in parking and loading areas.

Currently the track ends abruptly at 11 Street SW leaving cyclists to either turn onto a cycling lane a few blocks back on 8 Street or continue on through the busy Beltline neighbourhoods to visit friends and businesses in Sunalta.

Another place where there's room for improvement were some of the parking problems identified with businesses on 8 Avenue between 3 and 5 Street SW. Thivener said the city can make headway on consultations and changes on the cross section of the road in summer 2017.

"The rest of it seems to be operating OK," said Thivener. "There still are a decent chunk of people trying to make connections via 11 Street, but I think that's in the longer-term horizon, in terms of what we do over there."

Looking back, 2016 will be remembered as the year the city got on a path to safer streets with the adoption of the Pedestrian Strategy. METRO FILE

City aims to reduce pedestrian injuries

YEAR IN REVIEW

Technologies and tweaks to infrastructure could help

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

There've been at least 336 pedestrian-vehicle collisions that were reported by the city's traffic division in 2016, but according to Coun. Druh Farrell, the real number is much higher.

"Many are not reported," said Farrell. "They go home and find out they've broken something. It's often not catalogued by police."

She added that many of those after-the-fact complaints come in to her by email. She encourages all pedestrians to report collisions, no matter how minor, so that the city can have the data and work to improve trouble spots.

She said 2016 did see one major victory with city council's adoption of the Pedestrian Strategy.

The document outlines goals and measurable targets on making the city's roads and streets safer for pedestrians.

336

Pedestrian incidents reported by the city for 2016 to date.

More important than the adoption of the strategy itself was the money the city put behind it in the mid-cycle adjustments in November. "You can determine a council's values not by looking at its policies but at its budget," said Farrell.

Pat Grisak, leader in the Traffic Division for the city, said his department did a number of concrete things in 2016 to improve pedestrian safety, including the installation of new rectangular reflective flashing beacons at 30 crosswalks across the city, with plans for 70 more in 2017.

Another new technology introduced in 2016 was traffic-calming curbs – a made-in-Calgary solution that allows the city to drop moveable concrete curbs into place on the roadway.

"We're putting these out at various intersections to narrow roadways and reduce speed and reduce crossing distance for pedestrians," said Grisak, adding that they're collecting data to see how effective the curbs are.

Aside from physical changes, Grisak said they began holding ward traffic safety meetings as a way to exchange info with people in various communities. While the city gets to tell them about projects they're working on, they can hear from citizens about trouble hotspots.

> "Many are not reported. They go home and find out they've broken something." Coun. Druh Farrell

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VIOLENCE

Psychologist says time to call road rage out for what it is

Elizabeth Cameron
For Metro | Calgary

Speed and anonymity could be one explanation for a rash of violent incidents on Calgary roads, says one city psychologist.

Four recent incidents, including one where a woman was beaten with a hockey stick and another where as many as six people were involved in a melee on Macleod Trail last week are some roadway lowlights from the past two weeks.

In others, a man's back window was shot out by what police suspect was a pellet gun, and one man pulled bear spray on another after a wheeled dispute.

Christine Berry, director of family violence prevention initiatives with the Calgary Counselling Centre (CCC), said it's time for us to call road rage what it is – violence.

"The road rage title detaches these actions from responsibility – it's not the road they're angry at," Berry said.

The speed and anonymity offered by a vehicle could provide the right opportunity for someone feel powerful or more likely to get away with their actions, according to Berry.

"They want to make someone feel pain or 'pay' for their distress," she said.

Violence is often about power and control, but it could also be a lack of impulse control, according to Berry, who added that while many people manage and control difficult emotions, others cannot.

"Depending on what else is going on in your world, you may have less or greater ability to manage (your impulse control)," she said.

The incidents also have alarm bells ringing for Calgary police.

"It's shocking to see what goes on, and the level of violence associated to them," said Calgary's police chief Roger Chaffin while addressing reporters on Monday.

"These acts of cowardice on the road have to stop," said Chaffin, noting that these highly publicized incidents just scratch the surface of what's happening on Calgary streets.

Berry agreed.

"What we can say is it's alarming," she said.

"You ought to have the right to drive your car and not be assaulted because of it."

WITH FILES FROM HELEN PIKE/METRO

Calgary Police are still looking for information on this two-door BMW which was involved in a road-rage incident that resulted in a mother being beaten with a hockey stick. COURTESY CPS

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CRIME

Man charged in theft of vehicle

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

A Calgary man has been charged in relation to a carjacking to took place at Marlborough Mall last week.

Around 4:20 p.m. last Wednesday, a man parked his vehicle outside a restaurant at Marlborough Mall.

While he went inside the restaurant, leaving his wife and children in the vehicle, an unknown man entered the driver's seat and drove away.

The woman pleaded with the suspect to stop and called 9-1-1. The suspect stopped the car and exited by the Walmart at the Mall.

It was then the suspect entered a stolen Mazda 3S. It's believe he'd arrived at the mall in the stolen Mazda with another man. On Sunday, the suspect, Adrian Piotr Gembal, was arrested and charged with stolen property of $5,000 and theft of a motor vehicle.

IN BRIEF

Service dog killed in hit-and-run in Airdrie

A service dog was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver in Airdrie, and now police are looking for the driver who fled.

On Nov. 30, a woman was walking her roommate's service dog along 8 Street N, near the Silver Creek area, when the animal was hit by a vehicle.

The vehicle is believed to be a dark blue or green pickup truck with a male driver. BRODIE THOMAS/METRO

Calgary's Naheed Nenshi is optimistic about the new year, hoping that 2017 will be a good one. HELEN PIKE/ METRO

Mayor on budget: 'we really got it right'

YEAR IN REVIEW

Nenshi cautiously optimistic about 2017

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Sure, 2016 may go down as the "worst year ever" in popular culture with the death of Prince, Bowie and an ominous U.S. election to name a few things. But here in Calgary, we've got reasons to celebrate.

In 2016, the mayor would say council's biggest accomplishment was passing the budget unanimously – a big feat in his mind for the group of 14 people with very different mindsets, and ideas about what's best for Calgary.

That's two years in a row," Nenshi said. "I don't think we've passed a unanimous budget in 40 years before that. And I think that we really got it right."

With the economic downturn, council tried to balance the future needs of the city's rainy day coffers, while also recognizing for a majority of Calgarians, it's raining right now.

With the benefits of Zero Based Reviews showing full force, the city was able to save millions and keep up services.

Fees for core services, like transit, were frozen and property taxes will also hold the line – something cities like Edmonton and Vancouver can't say for themselves.

> **I think we're going to see the beginnings of economic recovery, at least I sure hope we are.**
> Naheed Nenshi

For 2017, Nenshi is cautiously optimistic for an economic bounce back.

"I think we're going to see the beginnings of economic recovery, at least I sure hope we are," he said.

For Canada's 150 birthday, the mayor is hoping Calgarians will remember the values that have landed us here: respect for one another, pluralism, diversity and helping others. He'll be launching his three things for Canada campaign (although he hasn't decided what exactly his three acts will entail).

But 2017 will be a time for the city to roll up sleeves; the beginning half of the year the city will need to make strides on important future-building decisions.

Nenshi said we need to lock funding for the Green Line down as soon as possible. And one yes or no decision on the Olympics for 2026 still hangs in the balance for the first half of 2017.

"And we're finally going to solve secondary suites," said Nenshi.

"OK, maybe not that last one."

MURDER SUICIDE

Dad, sons found dead in home

Corry MacDougall took his two sons to their hockey games, and coaches say nothing seemed amiss, the day before the three were found dead in an apparent double murder-suicide in their home west of Edmonton.

Radek, 11, was on the ice with the Spruce Grove Sabertooths peewee team early Sunday and was disappointed the concession wasn't yet open so he could buy a big bag of Double Bubble gum that he often passed around to teammates, says coach Brendan Ardron. His big brother, 13-year-old Ryder, played Sunday night with the city's bantam AA Timberwolves and was benched for part of the second period after a penalty. Coach Dallas Ansell says the quiet and loyal defenceman had improved over the season and was coming out of his shell and cracking jokes. The two coaches and other hockey officials, along with a pastor and a chaplain, gathered with players in an arena room Monday after learning the boys had been killed. There were lots of tears, added Ardron.

"It's a pretty hard pill to swallow as an adult, let alone when it's a kid and your friend has passed away for no reason," he said. "It doesn't make sense."

RCMP said three bodies were discovered in a home in Spruce Grove early Monday and that officers were not looking for any suspects. The boys' stepfather, Brent Stark, told local media that he and his wife, Tracy, made the discovery when they arrived to pick up the children. Stark, owner of the Whitecourt Wolverines of the Alberta Junior Hockey League, said the boys had been killed by their father, and called him a coward.

A memorial in the snow outside the house included hockey sticks, teddy bears and notes for the family. A vigil was to take place later Tuesday in the town of Whitecourt. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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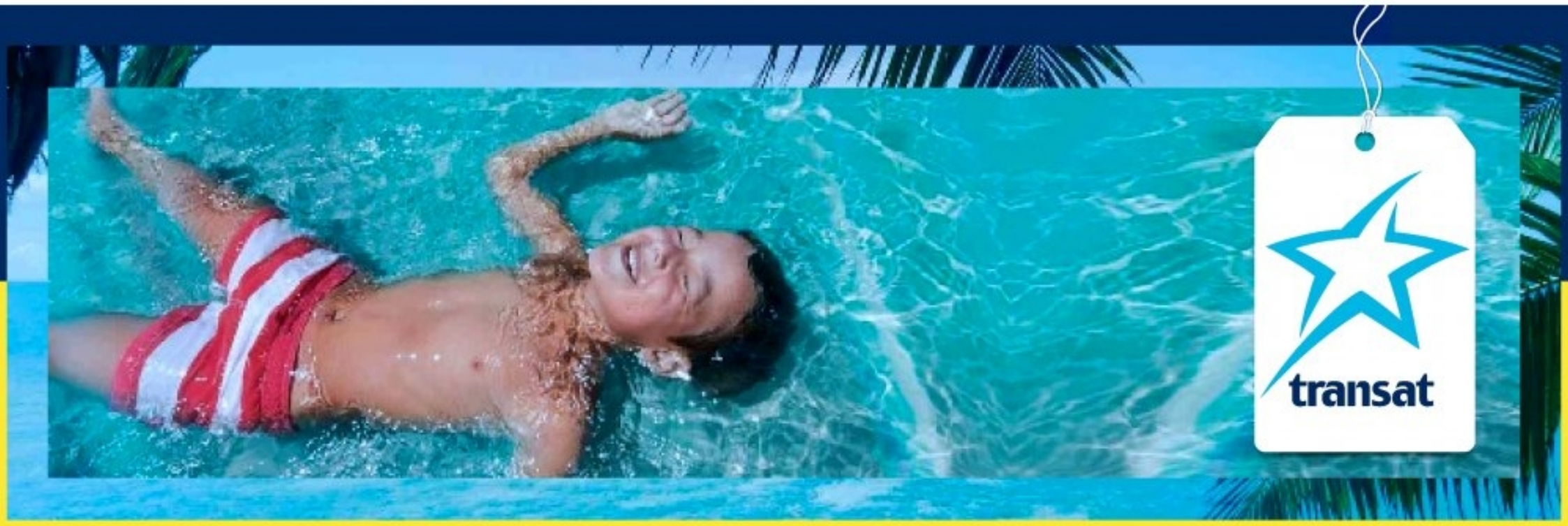

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Maryanne and Mike Donovan said banning them and their group BATH from protesting at the African Events Inc./ Calgary Alberta Chapter of Safari Club International events would go against their right to the freedom of speech. LUCIE EDWARDSON / METRO

Hunting expo seeks injunction

ANIMALS

Group seeking ban on trophy killing protests trade show

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

A Calgary man who advocates against African trophy hunting says an injunction being sought against him by the hosts of an annual traveling trade show would be a contravention of his right to the freedom of expression.

African Events Inc. and the Calgary Alberta Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI), are seeking what they called a preventative injunction that would permanently prevent Mike Donovan and Ban African Trophy Hunting (BATH) from protesting outside the groups' events that include an African trophy hunting exposition.

"They're entitled to protest and we're not against that, but when they protest, and what it got down to in court, was a discussion of what is defamatory, what is bad behaviour , what is allowed in front of Calgarians, Albertans and their children going to a legal trade show. What sort of things can you yell at those people?" said David Little, president of the Calgary chapter of SCI.

In court on Tuesday, SCI's lawyer, Christa Nicholson argued that they sought the injunction because they believed Donovan would "inevitably and very probably cause harm to the plaintiffs and that that harm would be substantial," something Donovan said isn't true.

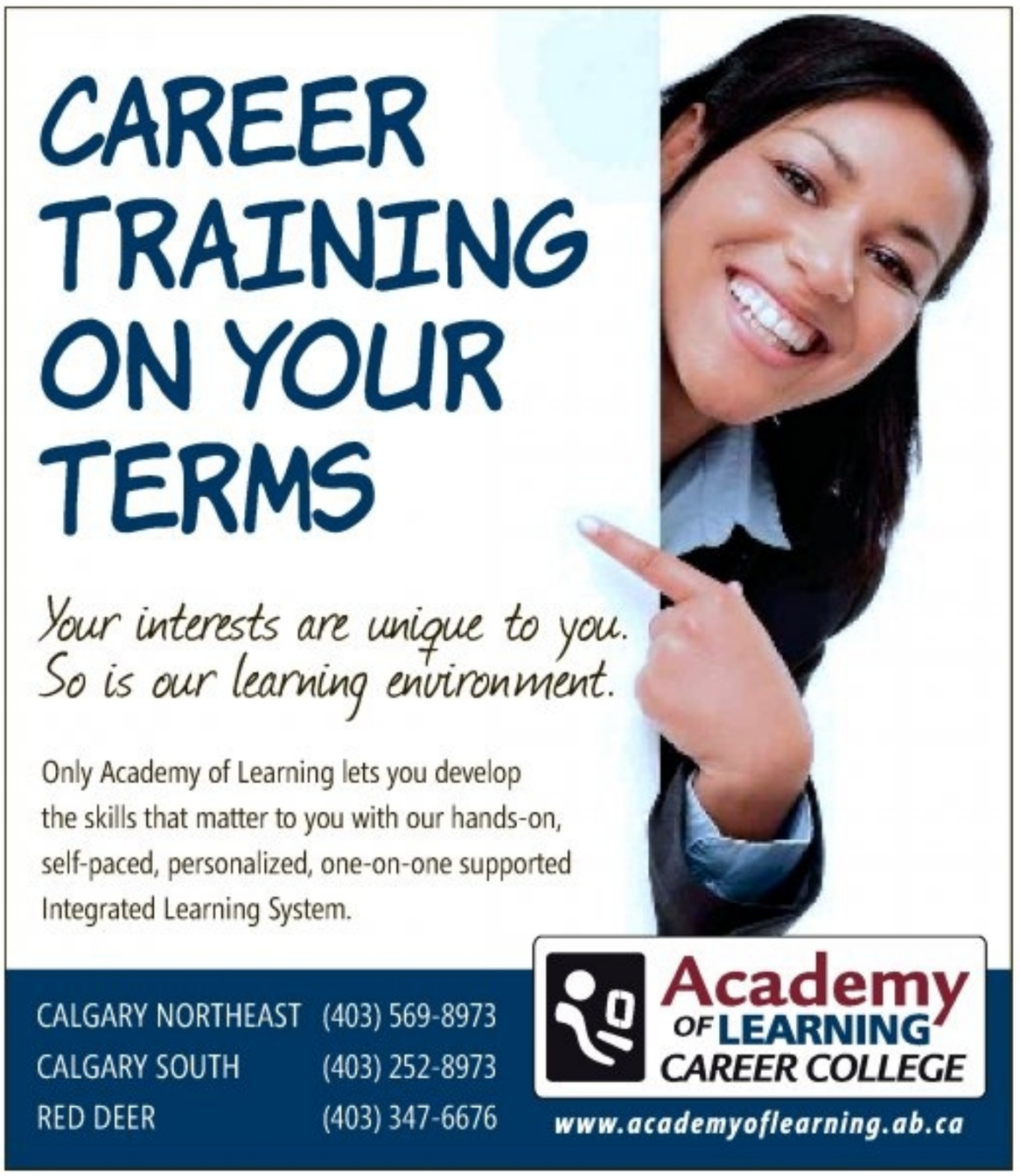
"I consider this to be a basic matter of freedom of expression," said Donovan, who self-represented. "The plaintiffs are playing the victim. There was nothing that transpired at any of the previous events that would lead them to believe they were in danger of physical harm."

Nicholson argued that Donovan's use of the words vile, sickening, immoral and unethical was in fact defamatory — as it could be harmful to the reputation of those it was used to describe. She then presented a list of what they would consider appropriate to yell, including "don't kill innocent animals."

"They're telling us what we can say and that they don't want us in front of their venue when we're saying it. I mean these are contraventions of the freedom of expression," said Donovan, adding that should the injunction be granted it would serve as a precedent for deterring all future protests including protests against pipelines.

The judge reserved his decision until he has reviewed all information

> "They're telling us what we can say and that they don't want us in front of their venue. Mike Donovan



DOWNTOWN

Parking authority refunds customers

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

In June, councillors passed changes to the parking policy framework, allowing the Calgary Parking Authority to collect funds for an extra two hours in downtown spaces where demand was high. Instead of starting to charge customers at 9 a.m., the change saw Calgarians shelling for parking beginning at 7 a.m. instead.

As it turns out, that wasn't in line with the city's own traffic bylaw.

"Late last week, as part of a routine review of the bylaw, we discovered that the policy and the bylaw weren't aligned," said Mike Derbyshire, CPA general manager in a prepared release, adding that they'd been charging and enforcing in the areas without authority between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. since Aug. 1

To date, the city issued 800 parking tickets in those newly-signed areas, which has netted the CPA $50,000 in fines and $100,000 in parking charges.

The authority is promising to pull any fines and "quash" any convictions immediately.

Refunds can be collected by emailing refunds@calgaryparking.com with your name, phone number and license plate number. If you have a cellphone account with the CPA, you will be reimbursed automatically.

BY THE NUMBERS

800

To date the city had issued more than 800 tickets in the newly-designed areas.

$50K

This netted the Calgary Parking Authority about $50,000 in fines.

$100K

It has also led to $100,000 in parking charges.

HEALTH

Dispatch agreement reached

Elizabeth Cameron
For Metro | Calgary

Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the City of Calgary have reached an tentative agreement on the handling of dispatch services within the city, according to a news release issued Tuesday.

As of April 1, 2017, the City of Calgary will be maintaining EMS dispatch services within city limits. Inter-facility transfers and areas outside of Calgary the city currently services will be maintained by AHS.

The city is planning to adopt dispatch software and other technology from AHS so that both parties will be using one provincial dispatch system, a move previously recommended by the Health Quality Council of Alberta.

The City of Calgary said in a statement the new agreement will provide additional protection in case one dispatch centre experiences a service outage or is overwhelmed with calls.

There are currently three communications centres in Alberta operated by AHS, including one in Calgary.

People are signing up to drive for Uber, and that means increased paperwork for the city's Livery Transport Services. METRO FILE

Uber signups put city in overdrive

TRANSPORTATION

Staff process hundreds of applications by hand

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

While Uber tries to ramp up their complement of drivers in Calgary, the city is doing what it can to keep up with demand on their now-taxed signup system.

The week Uber launched, the company reported an overwhelming interest from Calgarians, which made it tough for their service to keep up. Some people had no problems getting through to the app, while others were left falling back on the old faithful cab industry for a ride.

Last week, Uber Alberta's General Manager Ramit Kar said the company had hundreds of drivers ready, but were trying to get more on the road to keep up with demand which he said was "through the roof."

According to Mark Halat, manager of Compliance Services with The City of Calgary, in the first week of operations the city processed more than 500 drivers by hand to try and fulfil the Christmas rush to have Uber's transportation network company drivers on the road.

> **Often they don't come in with all of the information.**
> Mark Halat, manager of Compliance Services

"They want it like, now," Halat said. "These girls and guys that are processing applications are doing a bang up job … it's been a bit of wear and tear on the staff, but they're holding their own."

As it is now, Halat said seven city employees are working to get hundreds of drivers licensed for the road, putting other projects on hold to get the job done in a timely fashion.

The whole process is a standard of 10 to 12 business days until an automated process is finalized — the city's livery folks didn't want to rush the online sign up process because of potential hiccups.

One thing he said could help speed up the process, is if applicants bring in all of their required paperwork when they visit Livery Transport Services. According to the city's website, drivers must have proof of commercial insurance, vehicle inspection confirmation, a valid class 1, 2 or 4 licence, police criminal background check and proof they're registered to operate under an approved TNC.

"If TNC drivers are coming in on behalf of Uber are well prepared with all of the documentation, that will expedite the process," said Halat. "Often they don't come in with all of the information and get sent away because they don't have it."

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Theatres soldier on amid crisis

ARTS

Economic downturn spells funding trouble

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Every night, Calgary's theatres pull back the curtain to a world of magic – but pull that curtain back a little further, and you'll find that magic doesn't come cheap.

Most theatre companies in the city would agree that their funding comes from three main areas: one-third from government grants, one-third from corporate sponsorships and one-third from the box office.

Unfortunately, Calgary is in the midst of an economic downturn, so many of these companies have seen a significant drop in corporate sponsorships and ticket sales.

"I think that's pretty universal across the sector in Alberta – it's a ripple effect because of the price of oil. Everyone has had to prioritize," said Jennifer Faulkner, grant manager with Alberta Ballet.

Shrinking donations

For many of Calgary's big guns in theatre, they can't break even on ticket sales alone.

Earlier this year at the annual Mayor's Arts Lunch, Bob McPhee, general director with the Calgary Opera, said even if they sold out every show in their 2,000 seat venue, they still wouldn't break even.

Remember, the majority of these organizations are not-for-profits, so they focus on putting out a certain quality of work, rather than maximizing financial growth.

They count on individual and corporate donations – but when a company is laying off workers, it's hard to turn around and give money to the arts.

One Yellow Rabbit said they lost a major funder this year, which they've been working to replace with other smaller funders – a strategy companies like Alberta Theatre Projects, Alberta Ballet and many others have been trying as well.

They're looking to build relationships in sectors other than energy, especially going into 2017.

There's no substantial new funding coming from any level of government at the moment, so that leaves them to make up the lost money through ticket sales.

But there's a huge dilemma in doing that.

Increasing ticket prices

Low-ticket prices keep the theatre accessible.

Even the smallest show in One Yellow Rabbit's High Performance Rodeo festival – we're talking a minimal, one-person show here – still costs about $30,000 to $40,000 to put up.

Scale up for larger, more lavish shows and costs grow into the seven figures - When Alberta Ballet first put up the Nutcracker, it cost more than $1.5 million.

"People don't realize, but the performing arts are expensive, because they need resources, lights, sounds and the stage to work properly," said Ann Connors, managing director at One Yellow Rabbit.

Connors said they strive to keep ticket prices at around $45, but if all they had was the box office to keep the company afloat, those ticket prices would range from $75 to $100.

Vicky Stroich, executive director with Alberta Theatre Projects, said ticket prices start at $25. If they had to break even with just the box office, that would mean an increase to $75, and that's for their lowest ticket price.

Connor's concern is Calgary audiences aren't willing to pay that much for the theatre – and in this economy, people are a lot more frugal with their money.

In fact, just like corporate donations, theatre companies across the board are reporting a dip in ticket sales already.

Surviving the downturn

So, if these theatre companies are losing corporate donations and can't recoup the money by increasing ticket prices, what are they to do?

Well, so far we've been talking about the bigger companies in town – but it's actually mid-and-smaller-level theatre companies that hold the key to survival.

The guys and gals at places like Sage Theatre and Downstage Theatre aren't feeling the corporate burn so much as their larger-scale peers. Because of their size, corporations actually don't donate to them so often – the trade-off for marketing just isn't worth it.

Instead, these theatre companies rely on individual donors to make up that third of their budget.

"One of the things we started to do a few years ago is make a lot of meaningful connections with people in a way that would elicit small scale investments or donations," said Simon Mallet, Downstage Theatre artistic director. "So we have a higher number of donors, including some whose gifts are smaller in nature than others."

Jason Mehmel, Sage Theatre artistic director, said their big challenge actually comes from competing with Netflix, stay-at-home culture.

Because of their small budgets and their large competition, they focus on bringing really unique, personal shows to the stage – it has to be an experience beyond just a good story to get people out of the house.

It's their rise to these challenges that have created emotional ties to individual donors, who want to see these companies succeed.

While the big boys in town aren't completely writing off corporate sponsors – there's still an important amount of money to be found there – there has been a move to build new relationships with other industries, and other individuals.

BY THE NUMBERS

85%

85 per cent of Albertans attend one arts event per year — Arts Impact AB 2014

1/3

One-third of arts budgets come from corporate donations

40K

$40,000 is what the smallest, one person show at High Performance Rodeo costs

While shows like the Nutcracker have become family traditions, Alberta Ballet still needs donations to break even. COURTESY JEN GIBSON

Sage Theatre relies more on individual donations, from people interested in seeing smaller, personal shows like Bea find a place in the Calgary scene. COURTESY JEFF MCDONALD

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Dr. Christine Guptill, who plays the oboe, is urging musicians not to overwork themselves with Christmas concerts this year. KEVIN MAIMANN/METRO EDMONTON

Presenting the 'Knucklecracker'

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD

High demand for holiday music leads to injuries: Expert

Kevin Maimann
Metro | Edmonton

Many classical musicians get the same things for Christmas: a lot of extra work and a lot of extra injuries.

Indeed, one occupational therapist at the University of Alberta, who also plays the oboe, is using her experience with musical-induced injuries as inspiration to for new research into the strange spike in injuries that musicians face each year at Christmas.

Christine Guptill said the holiday season puts extra strain on the musically inclined — especially classical musicians in high demand for Christmas themed concerts — and this often leads to injuries.

"Just imagine you were working out. You have your regular workout routine and then all of a sudden someone tells you (that) you should be working out an extra 40 hours a week," said Guptill.

Guptill said musicians in general face more work-related injuries than people in most other occupations, and those injuries peak this time of year.

Most, like tendinitis and nerve compression, are related to repetitive strain. Some, like focal dystonia, are almost unique to musicians.

"A lot of musicians get heavily into what they're doing and they're not necessarily athletic types, and so they didn't necessarily get the background they should have in how you can protect yourself from these things," said Guptill, who has suffered several injuries as an oboist.

A recent Australian study showed 84 per cent of musicians had physical problems related to playing their instrument at some point in their career.

Popular shows like Nutcracker will run five times in a weekend over the holidays in Edmonton, and while the dancers will often take shifts, musicians will not.

With a tendency toward freelancing in the music world, most take on extra work whenever they can get it.

Guptill said it's important to have good posture when practising, not to spend too long hammering over the same difficult passage, and to take frequent breaks.

"About every half hour, people should be taking a five-minute break. If you're injured it should be more frequent," she said.

ARREST WARRANT

Police seek man connected to cocaine-trafficking operation

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Calgary police are seeking a man wanted on warrants for his alleged involvement in a drug trafficking operation.

In a news release, police said they obtained information from a member of the public in August of this year in relation to a possible cocaine trafficking operation.

Following a lengthy investigation, officers raided a residence in the 8800 block of Horton Road SW, along with three vehicles.

Their search revealed tens of thousands of dollars worth of crack and powder cocaine and other drug trafficking related things.

Police arrested two men in early November in the 9100 block of Macleod Trail S, and upon a search of the vehicle they arrived in police found drugs, cash and multiple cell phones.

Sam Marcello Kassiba, 32 of Calgary is charged with eight of counts of trafficking cocaine and eight counts of possession of proceeds of crime under $5K, amongst other related charges.

Police continue to search for the second accused in this case, Emmanuel Adali Dopiti , 29, of Calgary.

He is described as black, around 5'5" tall and 185 pounds. Police say his last known vehicle was a 2006 black Honda Civic.

MENSTRUATION

Stigma-busting tampon tree a new reason for the season

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

It's not a period piece, but something a Calgary arts student created to bring awareness to the cost of a woman's menstruation, no matter their economic status.

Menstruation is about as natural as blowing your nose, but the struggles some women go through for their monthly friend are nothing to sneeze at.

Alexa Shipanoff, a student at the Alberta College of Art and Design took this reality to heart when she created an interactive sculpture: a tree covered in feminine hygiene products for the needy to take.

Her assignment was to create a sculpture that embodied intervention, and although she aspired to make a shelter of some sort, she soon landed on another piece in the realm of giving back and homelessness.

"Personally I'm trying to remove my own stigmas about periods, not being embarrassed about it if I do leak through, or I need to ask somebody for a pad or a tampon," Shipanoff said.

"On top of trying to provide these things for people who need them, I want to raise awareness and make people less uncomfortable with the idea of periods."

> **I want to raise awareness and make people less uncomfortable with the idea of periods.**
> Alexa Shipanoff

The tree was placed downtown in front of the YWCA, where the period products were quickly snatched away. It was a mysterious and delightful surprise for the organization that does so much to help women.

"Our feeling was the intent behind the tree, as we're calling it, was recognizing women who are struggling with poverty and homelessness don't have access to the most basic things the rest of us women do," said spokeswoman Carla Link. "We thought it was a brilliant, lovely gesture."

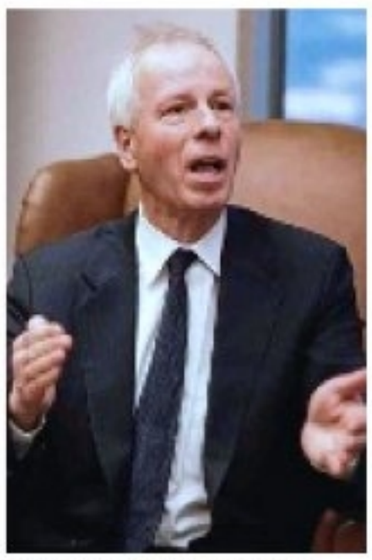
The tree, which now sits empty in front of the YWCA in Calgary. CONTRIBUTED

Shipanoff hopes to continue this installation, but in a grander way, to bring products, and awareness to women in need.

Time for Russia to start pulling its weight: Dion

POLITICS

Minister links week's tragedies to recruiting efforts by Daesh



Stephane Dion in his office in Ottawa on Monday. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

A Canadian tourist killed by Islamic extremists in Jordan. The assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey. The multiple killings of peaceful Berliners at a Christmas celebration.

All of this is linked by an "extremely bloody" ideology spouted by Daesh, says Foreign Affairs Minister Stephane Dion.

And it is about time Russia starts pulling its weight in fighting it, instead of pursuing its "bitter" victories in Syria, says Canada's top diplomat.

During a year-end interview, Dion linked this week's series of terror-related tragedies in Jordan, Turkey and Berlin to relentless recruiting efforts of Daesh.

"It's always, everywhere, the same ideology — an ideology that convinces young people that if they kill others because they don't share their beliefs, they will be heroes in this world and will go to heaven in the other world," said Dion.

"This ideology is extremely bloody and we will need to find a way to de-radicalize these people to make sure no terrorist group is able to have a territorial tyranny anywhere as (Daesh) has in Iraq and Syria."

Dion criticized Russia for its ongoing support of the regime of President Bashar Assad in Syria.

Dion also lamented the recent fall of Aleppo — from which convoys of shell-shocked civilians have departed.

Government forces, aided by Russia, crushed the anti-Assad opposition that was entrenched there.

"It must be very bitter," he said, "if they call it a win. I would call it a big failure for human kind."

Dion said he was encouraged by Monday's unanimous approval of the UN Security Council to deploy international monitors to Aleppo, but he said it's a development that should have occurred weeks ago.

He said Canada pushed for progress at the UN, but "the only ones who can make a difference are the Russians." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crew members from the Philippines talk as volunteers deliver food, supplies and gifts to the stranded crew of the Hanjin Scarlet container ship on Tuesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Stranded crew gets some holiday cheer

The stranded crew of an empty container ship tied up in an international bankruptcy issue received a shipment of donated holiday cheer Tuesday, including a Christmas tree, a 20-kilogram pig and 90 kilograms of barbecue coals.

Several maritime labour groups and members of Victoria's Filipino community gathered up more than a tonne of Christmas provisions for the 16-member crew of the 255-metre Hanjin Scarlet, anchored off Saturna Island, about 70 kilometres northeast of Victoria.

"It's lonely," said sailor Romeo Cabacang from the Philippines. "But all the crew, we are very happy for the early Christmas gift. We are very happy."

Cabacang, 40, who is married with two children in Manilla, said he's been on board the ship for 10 months, but doesn't know when that will change.

> **It's lonely, but we are very happy.**
> Romeo Cabacang

The South Korean and Filipino crew members have been technically homeless at sea since August, anchoring for months at a time outside Prince Rupert, Vancouver and the Southern Gulf Islands. They are being paid, but say they can't afford to leave the ship and their jobs.

The ship's captain, Jaewon Lee from South Korea, said his crew is in good shape and is patiently awaiting the bankruptcy issues to be resolved.

He said the crew is not going to shore because they need their rest and want to save money.

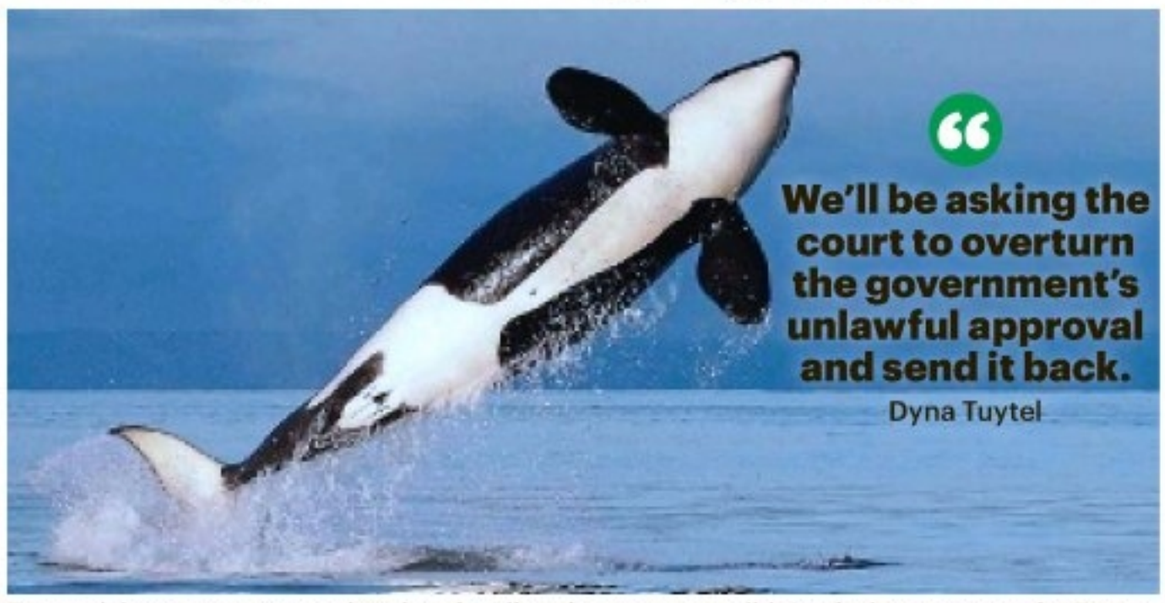
"Everybody well. Nothing problem," Lee said in broken English. He added the ship has a solid Internet connection, which allows his crew to stay in touch with their families.

Lee said he expects the crew to roast the pig on Christmas Eve.

The crew cheerfully helped unload the donated goods onto wood pallets which were then hoisted on deck with cargo nets and a crane.

Steve Hnatko, who represents a Vancouver area shipping service, said the longshore workers, ferry workers and other maritime labour groups gathered donations and delivered the goods from Vancouver and Victoria. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Group challenging pipeline on behalf of the killer whales



> **We'll be asking the court to overturn the government's unlawful approval and send it back.**
> Dyna Tuytel

Eco-activist groups are arguing that the Liberal government didn't take into account the Trans Mountain pipeline's impact on endangered killer whales. ELAINE THOMPSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Conservation groups have filed a new court challenge to the federal government's approval of the Trans Mountain oil pipeline.

The request for judicial review filed with the Federal Court of Appeal late Monday in Calgary is at least the eighth legal test of the controversial project, which will almost triple the capacity of an existing, 1,150-kilometre pipeline from near Edmonton to Burnaby, B.C.

The Liberal government gave the green light to the $6.8-billion pipeline expansion late last month, despite a thicket of existing legal challenges to the regulatory process.

Ecojustice lawyers, on behalf of the Living Oceans Society and Raincoast Conservation, say Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's cabinet broke the law when it relied on a National Energy Board assessment of Kinder Morgan's controversial pipeline expansion.

The groups argue the board — and thus the Liberal government — did not properly take into account the Trans Mountain pipeline's impact on endangered southern resident killer whales. "We'll be asking the court to overturn the government's unlawful approval and send it back to cabinet with instructions that it has to meet all the legal requirements," Ecojustice lawyer Dyna Tuytel said in a release.

Studies by the Raincoast Conservation Foundation suggest the whale population is severely stressed by a variety of factors, including shipping noise that disrupts the whales' ability to locate prey and communicate during the hunt.

Biologist Paul Paquet, the foundation's senior science adviser, said the increased tanker traffic not only increases the likelihood of oil spills, but will further compromise the killer whales' ability to feed due to additional, cumulative ship noise.

"We have consistently said that approving this project is approving the probable extinction of the southern resident killer whales," Paquet said in the release. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trudeau vows to defend Canadian values

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

POLITICS

PM draws his line if Trump goes too far

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says he would not hesitate to protect the interests — and the values — of Canadians if they clash with the agenda of U.S. president-elect Donald Trump.

In a year-end interview, Trudeau was asked where he would draw a line in the sand between himself and Trump, who promises to be a less-than-ordinary president of the world's only superpower and Canada's most important trading partner.

"I do not want to dive into the hypothetical, but you're asking me, 'where is the line?' The line, for me, is that I will act in a way that ensures that Canadians do not suffer and have all the benefits and opportunities that I can possibly give them," he said.

Trudeau said his top responsibility is to serve the interests of the country that elected him.

That means creating good jobs, fostering trade with the United States and settling differences with Canada's largest trading partner; but it goes beyond the economy.

"It is also in the interest of Canadians to have a more open, more tolerant, more secure world," he said.

There are different ways to "protect and improve" opportunities and results for Canadians, which is something he said applies not only to Trump.

"In certain situations, it's to work in a very collaborative way. In other situations, it will be to be very clear that we do not share the same values," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

U.S. president-elect Donald Trump. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

FOCUS GROUPS

Kids skeptical of legal pot, poll finds

With apologies to The Who, the kids may not be alright with this.

A series of 24 focus groups on perceptions of marijuana legalization commissioned by the federal Liberal government found that the youngest teenaged participants were the most cautious about the policy shift.

The government has been laying the groundwork for months on a major public education and awareness campaign that will accompany the looming legalization of recreational marijuana.

Health Canada commissioned a series of focus group surveys last June to plumb public perceptions around legalized cannabis, including the health impacts and attitudes to drug-impaired driving.

According to Earnscliffe Strategy Group, which won the $136,000 research contract in March, an "overwhelming majority" of focus group participants in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax were aware of the promised end to pot prohibition and that "most, particularly those over the age of 18, were generally comfortable with the idea."

The notable outliers among the focus groups were 13- to 15-year-olds, and in some cases their parents.

"The one audience that held slightly less positive views about the legalization of marijuana were youths 13-15," says the report, noting some were "not at all familiar with marijuana."

The focus groups were heavily weighted toward younger Canadians, using six distinct cohorts. Three cohorts covered ages 13-15, 16-18 and 19-24, while another two involved parents of younger and older teenagers. Only one group in each city included general participants aged 25 and up.

The youngest participants struggled to identify advantages perceived by older participants — perceptions that included economic benefits from taxing the product, standardized and reliable marijuana quality, an end to black-market activity and reduced strain on police and the court system from marijuana possession charges.

The 13-to-15 year olds — and some of their parents — were also the most skeptical about perceptions on limiting marijuana accessibility. By contrast, most participants felt legalized pot would not increase either cannabis usage or accessibility for youngsters.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Most participants in focus groups on marijuana legalization felt legalized pot would not increase either cannabis usage or accessibility for youngsters. ISTOCK

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Recognize those with the cameras

Eduardo Lima
Metro | Toronto

There's a lot I'll never know about the photographers who captured the assassination of Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov.

I don't know how brave they are, and I can't imagine what went through their minds as Mevlut Mert Altintas opened fire at a run-of-the-mill press event.

What I do know is this: Bravery is not the only factor involved in being able to take pictures in an unexpected situation. It's also professionalism.

The settings on their cameras were perfect. The framing is almost cinematic. And they didn't flinch even once. Standing less than five metres away from a man who could have taken their lives, Burhan Ozbilici and Yavuz Alatan held their ground and did their jobs.

As photographers, we love taking pictures and as photojournalists, we relish the opportunity to record history. There's an invisible switch that photographers flip once a camera is in our hands. It makes us aware of everything around us and it makes them eager to climb trees, jump fences, lay flat on our stomachs, just for the sake of a picture.

Ozbilici and Alatan will both be likely candidates to win a prize from the World Press Photo Foundation next year. But, beyond that, they drew attention this week to the thousands of photographers who've dedicated their lives to making the pictures that make history.

Bravery aside, their excellence deserves our recognition.

Eduardo Lima is Metro Toronto's chief photographer. He has worked on projects in Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East and won multiple awards for his work.

Members of the Turkish forces honour guard carry the coffin of Russian Ambassador to Turkey, Andrei Karlov, who was assassinated Monday. EMRAH GUREL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Assassination could bring nations closer

DIPLOMACY

Russia, Turkey could see age of co-operation

The assassination of Russia's ambassador to Turkey could actually bring the two regional powers closer together, with Russia reaping political benefits by arguing that it has paid a high price for fighting terrorism as Turkey, embarrassed by its security breaches, increasingly co-ordinates with Russia in neighbouring Syria.

The two nations were already trying to resolve their differences over the war in Syria since Turkey shot down a Russian military jet along the Syrian border last year.

The measured reactions of their leaders to the killing Monday night of Ambassador Andrei Karlov by a Turkish policeman in Ankara shows they want to stay on the path toward reconciliation.

> **Moscow will undoubtedly milk the opportunity.**
> Dimitar Bechev

The prospect of closer ties between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan could have implications for the West, which has had contentious relations with both leaders and is also trying to engineer a solution to the Syrian war and the millions of refugees it has created.

While both Russia and Turkey are involved in Syria, Russia is the senior partner in any deal-making in a conflict that has sent several million refugees across the border into Turkey, straining its resources and economy.

Analyst Dimitar Bechev said Russia could now have additional leverage and extract concessions from Turkey, including on Syrian issues, following the ambassador's death.

"No doubt, in public, Russia will second whatever explanation the Turks produce to account for the attack. In private, however, there will be a price tag," Bechev wrote on a blog run by the London School of Economics and Political Science.

"Moscow has the higher ground and will undoubtedly milk the opportunity to the best of its abilities," he wrote.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEXICO

29 dead in blast

An explosion ripped through Mexico's best-known fireworks market on the northern outskirts of the capital Tuesday, killing at least 29\ people, injuring scores more and sending a huge plume of charcoal-grey smoke billowing into the sky.

Police announced the toll from the afternoon blast at the open-air San Pablito Market in Tultepec.

"My condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this accident and my wishes for a quick recovery for the injured," said President Enrique Pena Nieto via Twitter.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERLIN

Daesh claims truck attack

Daesh claimed responsibility Tuesday for a truck attack on a crowded Berlin Christmas market that German authorities said came right out of the extremist group's playbook, inflicting mass casualties on a soft target fraught with symbolic meaning.

The Monday night attack on the market by the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in the heart of former West Berlin left 12 dead and 48 injured, the first mass casualty attack by Islamic extremists carried out on German soil. German security forces were still hunting for the perpetrator.

The claim of responsibility carried on Daesh's Amaq news agency described the man seen fleeing from the truck as "a soldier" of Daesh who "carried out the attack in response to calls for targeting citizens of the Crusader coalition."

Prosecutors said they had released a man picked up near the scene of the attack, initially suspected of driving the truck.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHINA

Canadian beauty queen won't be silenced on atrocities

Anastasia Lin says when she first learned about allegations the Chinese government was harvesting organs from religious prisoners to fuel its transplant industry, she decided to use an unconventional platform to raise awareness.

Lin spoke out about the alleged plight of Falun Gong practitioners in China while taking part in the 2015 Miss World Canada beauty pageant, which she won. Since then, she has become an outspoken critic of the Chinese government.

"To not do anything is just so wrong," said Lin, 26, who is based in Toronto but spent her teenage years in Vancouver after emigrating from China with her mother.

"Public pressure works. We have way more leverage than we think we do," she said. "We might think that China is this big, tough bully that just doesn't listen to anyone. But that's not true."

Falun Gong is a spiritual practice that emerged in China in the early 1990s, but by the end of the decade it had prompted a crackdown by the Chinese Communist Party. Falun Gong spokesman Joel Chipkar alleges the persecution was prompted by the organization's unwillingness to cede control to the Chinese government.

Reports from human rights organizations such as Amnesty International have emerged of thousands of imprisoned Falun Gong followers being executed for their body organs.

Multiple requests for comment to the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa and the Chinese Consulate in Vancouver went unanswered.

Lin said she was originally inspired to take a stand on the issue by the advocacy work of former Miss World Canada Nazanin Afshin-Jam, who is married to former federal attorney general Peter MacKay.

In 2015, Lin was declared persona non grata by the Chinese government and barred from entering China when she tried to travel there to represent Canada in that year's Miss World pageant.

Miss World 2016 took place in Washington, D.C., and this year Lin was able to take part.

"My one goal was not the tiara," Lin said. "I just wanted to be on Chinese television. ... If they can see me on stage they will know (I have not given up), so neither should they."

She also wanted to be seen by her father, who she said has been barred from leaving China because of her activism.

Miss World 2016 wrapped up last weekend, with the contestant from Puerto Rico taking the crown.

Chipkar, a Toronto-based spokesman for Falun Gong, applauded Lin for helping shed light on the organ-harvesting allegations.

"Any awareness to these crimes is like a light bulb that comes on in a dark room," Chipkar said. "As soon as the light comes on, the darkness disappears."

Anastasia Lin TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Winning starts
with a strong foundation.

Emails between top aide Huma Abedin and Hillary Clinton were found on Abedin's ex-husband's computer. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fear of hacks behind FBI's email probe

UNITED STATES

Saw Clinton data on private computer as a security threat

The FBI was trying to get a look at thousands of Hillary Clinton's emails on disgraced former congressman Anthony Weiner's computer partly to see if anyone had hacked in to steal classified information, according to court documents unsealed Tuesday.

Investigating possible hacking appeared to be a secondary rationale for the email search, which FBI Director James Comey launched in the waning days of the presidential election.

When the FBI asked a magistrate judge in New York to issue a search warrant for Weiner's computer on Oct. 30, an agent spent pages describing concerns it might contain evidence Clinton had mishandled classified information.

The warrant application, made public Tuesday, was filed two days after Comey informed Congress that investigators had discovered email correspondence that could be pertinent to his recently closed probe of Clinton's use of a private email server while she was secretary of state.

In the document, the agent wrote that thousands of emails between Clinton and top aide Huma Abedin had been discovered on a laptop used by Weiner, Abedin's estranged husband.

At the time, investigators had yet to look at the content of those emails, but based on previous work in the case the agent wrote they had reason to suspect they might contain classified material that could cause "grave damage to national security" if disclosed.

A magistrate judge signed off on the search warrant that day. The FBI hasn't publicly revealed whether it found any evidence of a hacking attempt.

During the presidential campaign, hackers accessed email accounts of Democratic Party officials and Clinton's campaign chief, John Podesta, and leaked them to the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks.

Anthony Weiner THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. intelligence officials have linked the hacking to Russia's intelligence agency and its military intelligence division, although Moscow has denied those accusations.

After getting court consent to delve into the newly discovered emails on Weiner's computer, agents spent several days analyzing them before Comey announced they contained no new evidence of wrongdoing by Clinton.

The surprise restart of the email probe upended the presidential race days before the election. Clinton supporters blamed the investigation for her loss to Republican Donald Trump.

Weiner's laptop was initially seized by agents investigating his online relationship with a teenage girl in North Carolina. That inquiry is ongoing.

Weiner, who resigned from congress in 2011 after revelations he was sending sexually explicit messages to multiple women, has acknowledged he corresponded with the teenage girl and has apologized for his "terrible judgment." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NORTH CAROLINA

Law that limits LGBTQ rights may be axed

Legislators who passed the North Carolina law known as the "bathroom bill" nine months ago head back to the capital Wednesday to consider repealing it. But there's uncertainty over exactly what lawmakers will do, in part because this Republican-controlled legislature has shown a willingness to go its own way, despite intense outside pressure to scrap the law.

Over the past year, there has been bitter fighting between Democrats and Republicans. Just last week, Republican leaders convened a surprise legislative session and passed two laws designed to bring Democratic Gov.-elect Roy Cooper's powers in check when he becomes governor Jan. 1.

Cooper blasted outgoing Republican Gov. Pat McCrory over the law known as House Bill 2 during the governor's race, and the fallout over the law — job losses, cancelled concerts and sporting events — contributed to McCrory's narrow defeat. The wide-ranging law is best known for requiring transgender people to use restrooms corresponding to the sex on their birth certificate in many public buildings.

GOP Rep. Chuck McGrady of Hendersonville supports repealing the entire law and said he believes a significant number of House members from both parties do as well.

However, lawmakers were already under pressure from some conservative groups to keep HB2 in place.

The law also limits statewide protections for LGBTQ people in public accommodation and employment, and it reinforced a prohibition on local governments from raising minimum wage.

Local governments are also prevented from enacting nondiscrimination measures that would go further than state law.

LGBTQ advocates said they were cautiously hopeful. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Strategic shift is working, BlackBerry's head insists

TECHNOLOGY

Most revenue now comes from software and services

BlackBerry's CEO shrugged off a $117-million US third-quarter loss, saying the former smartphone maker turned software firm is no longer in turn-around mode and will grow its software revenue faster than the market next year.

"Everything that we have to do in order to address the, kind of, the downdraft of the business, we addressed," John Chen told reporters Tuesday.

The Waterloo, Ont.-based firm completed a number of significant milestones as part of its strategic transformation to exit the hardware business, he said.

It inked two deals with partners that will design, manufacture and distribute phones that use BlackBerry's software in most of the world. A third one is in the works for India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Chen said. BlackBerry receives royalties, which could boost its mobility solutions revenue that has struggled amid lacklustre hardware sales.

BlackBerry has reached deals with partners who will design, manufacture and distribute phones that use BlackBerry's software in most of the world. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The company is also trying to position itself in the burgeoning market of self-driving vehicles, and on Monday it opened a research centre for autonomous cars in Ottawa.

It has also announced a new platform, BlackBerry Secure, that integrates all of the company's recent acquisitions and intends to help companies reliably manage their current and future connectivity needs, like keeping tabs on all their devices.

Still, the transformation has yet to eliminate BlackBerry's losses before adjustments.

BlackBerry, which reports in U.S. dollars, says its latest quarterly loss amounted to 22 cents per share. That compared with a loss of $89 million or 17 cents per share a year ago.

Revenue was $289 million, down from $548 million a year earlier. With adjustments, revenue for the quarter was $301 million. The majority of adjusted revenue — about 55 per cent — came from BlackBerry's new focus of software and services, which brought in $164 million, an increase of $8 million from the previous quarter and $10 million from the same quarter last year.

It wasn't enough to offset declines in other areas.

But Chen remains confident the company's new focus will pay off, anticipating 30 per cent growth in software and services for the full financial year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

OFFSHORE DRILLING

Industry unfazed by ban

Ottawa's move to ban offshore oil and gas licensing in Canadian Arctic waters prompted a shrugging of shoulders Tuesday from energy industry observers who point out there are no drilling plans in the region now, partly due to exorbitant costs.

The measure announced Tuesday was part of a joint announcement with the U.S., which designated the bulk of its federally controlled waters in the Arctic Ocean and certain areas in the Atlantic Ocean as indefinitely off-limits to future oil and gas leasing.

Michael Byers, a University of British Columbia professor who recently published a book Who Owns the Arctic?, said the only surprise in the Canadian government's announcement is that it provides for a five-year review of the ban.

Byers said the move seems to be politically motivated and is designed to show that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is protecting the environment despite a recent decision to sanction two oil pipelines — the Trans Mountain expansion and Line 3 replacement project.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WHATSAPP MERGER

Facebook accused of misleading EU's watchdog

The European Commission is investigating whether Facebook gave misleading information about its takeover of mobile messaging service WhatsApp two years ago.

The Commission, the EU's merger and anti-trust watchdog, is concerned that Facebook can match its users' accounts with WhatsApp user accounts. The company said in 2014 that it could not do this. But Facebook's August terms of service and privacy update suggest it can, according to the Commission.

"The Commission's preliminary view is that Facebook gave us incorrect or misleading information during the investigation into its acquisition of WhatsApp. Facebook now has the opportunity to respond," EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said.

Facebook could face fines of up to 1 per cent of its turnover if those suspicions are confirmed.

In a statement, Facebook said it respects the Commissioner's process and is "confident that a full review of the facts will confirm Facebook has acted in good faith."

"We've consistently provided accurate information about our technical capabilities and plans, including in submissions about the WhatsApp acquisition and in voluntary briefings before WhatsApp's privacy policy update this year," Facebook said. "We're pleased that the Commission stands by its clearance decision, and we will continue to co-operate and share information officials need to resolve their questions."

The August update could allow a link-up between WhatsApp phone numbers and Facebook user identities, which could help Facebook offer better "friend" suggestions or display more relevant ads on the Facebook page of a WhatsApp user. Such EU probes do not imply guilt, but they give companies the chance to examine relevant documents, reply in writing, or request an oral hearing.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Wednesday, December 21, 2016

JESSICA ALLEN ON SILVER-SCREEN ESCAPISM

I know a thing or two about nostalgia and I am sensitive to others using my weakness to emotionally manipulate me.

My Christmas tree lights conked out the other night. They were a multi-coloured set that cast a soft, foggy glow, like the tree lights from my childhood, probably because they are literally the tree lights from my childhood. I can't bring myself to replace them with those new, garishly bright (and safer) LED lights. So the tree sits in darkness.

This all goes to say that I know a thing or two about nostalgia. Yes, I take it too seriously, which is why I am sensitive to others using my weakness to emotionally manipulate me. For example: Stranger Things, the thrilling sci-fi Netflix series set in the '80s that provided a quick fix of that decade's greatest cultural hits. But when the buzz wore off, it felt a little superficial — like high-end audio equipment that's deliberately designed to look like a radio from the '20s. That's nostalgia in a nutshell: It makes you melancholy for a time you'll never get back, or even for a time you didn't exist in.

And now there's La La Land, which opens on Christmas Day, to contend with. Even if you don't follow award blogs, you know that the film, written and directed by Damien Chazelle, is —alongside Moonlight and Manchester By the Sea — an Oscar contender for best picture. But when the masses tell me I'm going to love something, my knee-jerk reaction is to hate it.

The whole Manichean world of comics was a response to the same social conditions that gave us Busby Berkeley.

"Though bathed in affection for the song-and-dance magic of vintage Hollywood" Brian D. Johnson of Maclean's recently wrote, "it has a keen contemporary edge. As both a musical and rom-com, La La Land subverts as many conventions as it fetishizes, while wrapping its love story around the frustration of two artists holding out for truth and beauty amid a showbiz world enslaved to money."

"We'll see about that, Brian," I thought to myself just before a recent screening of the film. I stewed in my seat thinking about all the ways it would cheapen my love for the classic films I knew it would reference. Like Bringing up Baby and Casablanca, which were both shot on the Warner Bros. lot where Mia (Emma Stone), an aspiring actress, works as a barista. Ryan Gosling plays Sebastian, a struggling musician who dreams of preserving the great American art of jazz. He introduces Mia, who equates jazz to Kenny G, to the artistry of Kenny Clark, among others.

I successfully willed myself to hate La La Land for approximately 30 seconds, when I looked down and saw my feet tapping to the music. And although I was distracted by the overly produced dubbing during the big group musical numbers, not to mention Gosling having at least one hand in his pocket at all times — even when he's playing the piano — I liked it. It was magical, like everyone said it would be, and the unexpected ending is seeped in ennui, just like my Christmas tree lights.

Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone in a scene from La La Land.
LIONSGATE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

And here's the thing: I did feel manipulated, but somehow, with the cinema lights low, I didn't mind La La Land taking the lead in transporting me far away from the cynicism of 2016.

Chazelle is not clairvoyant: He's been trying to get La La Land made for five years, so the timing of its release this year, which by most accounts has been awful, is coincidental. But it's telling he that he mined vintage Hollywood to soothe a culture desperate to escape.

The genius of Hollywood filmmakers in the '30s was that they found beautiful ways to offer escape from the reality of the Depression and the rise of fascism. Audiences were enchanted by Fred and Ginger, and Shirley Temple, while socially realistic movies, like Charlie Chaplin's City Lights and Modern Times, made them smile despite the darkness.

For the last decade, the dominant form of escape has been the superhero-super-effects-big-budget-CGI extravaganza. They don't bear much resemblance to an angel-faced child singing about the good ship Lolly Pop, but Superman, Batman and the whole Manichean world of action comics was a response to the same social conditions that gave birth to Busby Berkeley's spinning stages.

Our world — in which a literal super villain stirs up hatred on Twitter from a fortress of solitude in Gotham City while he waits to take the highest office in the land — may be no less complicated. In fact, our purveyors of escape might have to work harder.

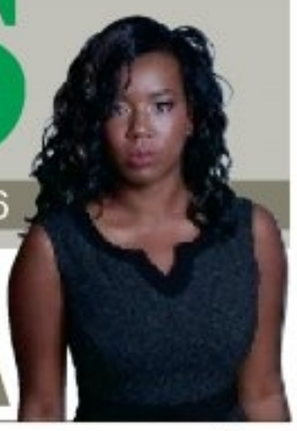
"During the Depression, when the spirit of the people is lower than at any other time," President Franklin Roosevelt said in 1934, "it is a splendid thing that for just 15 cents an American can go to a movie and look at the smiling face of a baby and forget his troubles."

The ticket price is higher 82 years later. But I think the sentiment is the same, especially on Christmas Day when so many go see a movie to escape everything from their credit card statements to racist Uncle Gary who's staying for the holidays.

The lights go down, and it's magic.

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

VICKY MOCHAMA



Trump politics aren't coming to Canada — they're already here

Donald Trump is already in Canada, and he can be found the heart and minds of Canadians. There's a tendency to think that Canada is safe from such phenomena. But based on the attitudes of Canadians, not only are we not free from it but also we're susceptible.

In Canada, the xenophobic and racist attitudes that propelled Trump aren't far beneath our "sunny ways" and "refugees welcome" surface.

Forum Research released a survey which found that of 1,304 Canadians, 41 per cent have an "unfavourable" feeling about one of the following groups: Muslims, First Nations, South Asians, Jews and black people. The use of the word "unfavourable" even feels like a way to shield racism, as if the KKK were merely an organ of unfavourable opinion.

Racist attitudes though aren't just hidden in seemingly innocuous phrasing, they're evident in what is perceived to be true. An exhaustive poll of global attitudes found that Canadians think that Muslims constitute 18 per cent of our population when, in fact, they're only three per cent of the country. Despite our progressive and multicultural self-image, Canadians vastly overestimate the population of Muslims. For example, Canadians think that in 2020 a full 26 per cent of the country will be Muslim when the population is expected to stay about the same as now. This notion of a vast-yet-ultimately-mythical population is what politicians of the Trump-Farage-Leitch ilk rely on.

A CBC-Angus Reid poll found that 68 per cent of respondents felt that minorities should be doing more to fit in with mainstream society instead of keeping their own customs and values. In this, we are no better than our American neighbours. When the same questions was put to Americans, only 53 per cent felt the same way.

There is no question that racists in Canada have been emboldened by the events in the U.S. Racialized citizens across the country have been sharing their own stories of being attacked based on their (perceived) race. Last week, our colleague Irene Kuan shared how a man on the subway told her to "go back to Hong Kong." She is from Toronto.

The question is how do we prevent racial resentments from upsetting our democracy? Our institutions — schools, police, media, etc. — must acknowledge that they help perpetuate those attitudes. (Why does my industry only report the race of criminals when they are not white?)

Finally, white Canadians, including ethnic whites, need to publicly speak about their privileges and challenges. Racism thrives on asking non-whites to prove and adapt to their oppression while requiring little labour from those who most benefit.

Racism — overt and covert — remains pervasive. These surveys are proof of our past, but the attitudes found within need not be our future.

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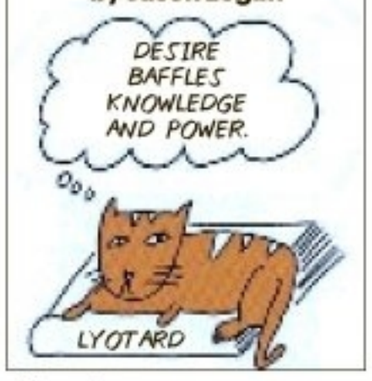

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metro LIFE

Your essential daily news

Light exercise may help concussed kids recover faster, CHEO's Dr. Roger Zemek finds in study

Mulled wine and hot chocolate: Better together or a sludgy mess?

Some things just go together: Caramel and salt, tomato and oregano, and, according to this season's latest food fad, red wine and hot chocolate. But does this best-of-both-worlds beverage deserve its social-media star status? We enter our test kitchen to find out. GENNA BUCK/METRO

Armed with half a pound of chocolate, a bottle of red wine, and three colleagues as guinea pigs, the Metro Life staff set out to mix up our own version of 2016's trendy holiday drink: red wine hot chocolate.

It's exactly what it sounds like — a combination of two beloved winter warmers which, for some reason, no one thought to put together before now. By the end of our experiment, we had a better idea of why.

First, we mulled two cups of red wine (Hardy's Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon) with two heaping teaspoons of sugar, a few orange slices and a handful of spices — cinnamon sticks, freshly grated nutmeg, juniper, star anise and ancho chili.

In another pot, we heated a litre of two-per-cent milk to steaming and slowly stirred in 200g of chopped dark chocolate (70 per cent cocoa).

Once both were piping hot, we strained the wine into the chocolate mixture. And that's when things started to go a little sideways.

No matter how much we stirred and sieved, the chocolate never fully melted, leaving us a drink with a curdled, chalky texture and a bracing, acidic taste: not exactly luxurious. Though, according to our section editor Emina Gamulin, "It grows on you."

We agreed the beverage would be better with a sweet milk chocolate, and a lot less of it.

In a moment of inspiration, we added a healthy glug of whipping cream to one of the mugs and zapped it in the microwave. That tasted more like something we'd want to drink in front of a roaring fire.

Metro Life's Emina Gamulin and Genna Buck made the drink that's been praised by food bloggers, Instagrammers — even the New York Times and Cosmo mag. METRO

As the instagrammers say, this treat is #sorich, but if you'd like to gild the lily, whipped cream or marshmallows would be an ultimate garnish.

And it's the holidays, so why not both?

INITIAL THOUGHTS

VERDICT

Vicky Mochama
Metro's daily columnist was intrigued. "Is this what the kids on Instagram are drinking?"

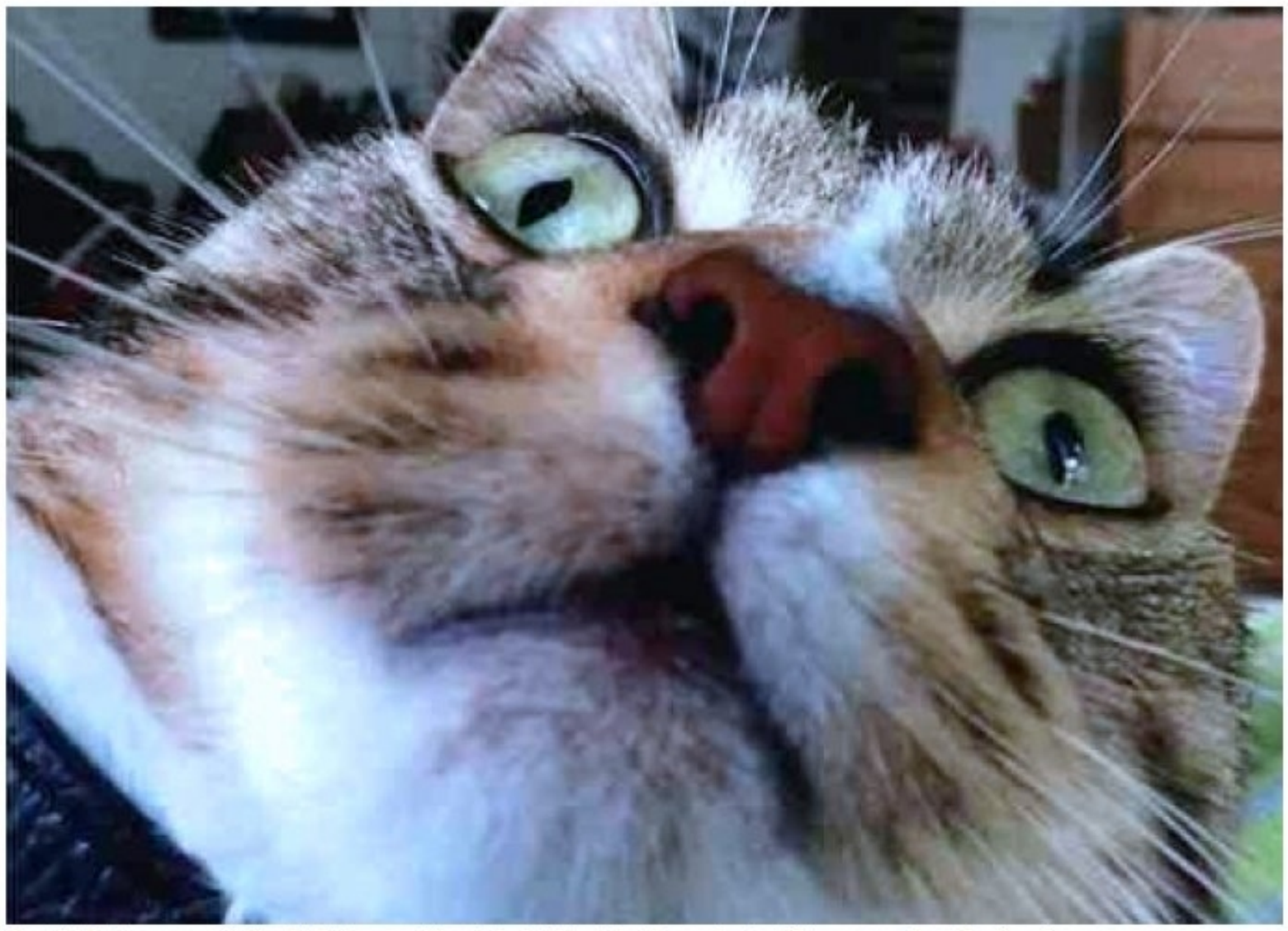
Not impressed. "It has a porridge-like consistency."

Luke Simcoe
Our senior reporter turned down whipped cream and marshmallows: "Nothing you put on this is going to make me like it more."

"Wine and milk, together at last? That's just not a thing people say."

May Warren
Metro's city reporter is an adventurous eater. "I'm excited," she said before our taste test.

May pulled a pained face and said, "so disappointing."



Candid Catmera uses feline facial recognition to help kitty take the perfect selfie — even when they're alone. CONTRIBUTED

Does this filter make my ears look big?

CANDID CATMERA

New app that helps your cat paws for the perfect selfie

Kris Abel
For Metro Canada

Among cats, it's curiosity that leads to the best selfies. That's according to the makers of Candid Catmera, an iPhone and iPad app that uses virtual fish, mice, and laser pointers and others treats to entice your feline to come play in front of your mobile device.

"I like the one with the can-opener, opening up the can of food," says Jen Mete, the Halifax-based producer who worked on the app for Current Studios.

Getting a cat to stand in front of the lens is one thing, to make sure the camera catches them when they're looking the right way the app uses very sophisticated software.

"We affectionately refer to it as feline facial recognition," explains Mete. "It automatically takes a series of photos and analyzes the characteristics of the subject and only saves the ones of your cat to the gallery."

So you can take a selfie with your cat, for example, but your cat has to always be in the shot. It's a cat-only app.

"Like if I put my face up to it, it might take a photo," explains Mete, "but it won't save the photo because after it goes into the cat recognition filter, it'll decide that I am not a cat."

It's not just the need for pointed ears and whiskers, the software is built to recognize fur on faces too. But again, only feline ones.

"People ask 'Why don't we do it for dogs?' well, actually it's a little trickier because dogs all have very different characteristics," says Mete. "But whereas cats all have fairly similar characteristics, so that really helped while building up our database of traits to track."

Once the app is running on your device, the app will snap cat selfies even if you're not home and send them to your phone for approval and sharing on social media.

For every copy of the app sold, $1 goes to the SPCA whose cats helped test the technology.

"We spent a couple of days with them, testing out the app, and what I found pretty exciting is that they actually enjoyed playing with the app," says Mete.

"I'm a huge advocate for animal welfare and it hits me on both sides, like professionally, what an incredible piece of technology while doing something wonderful for the cats as well."

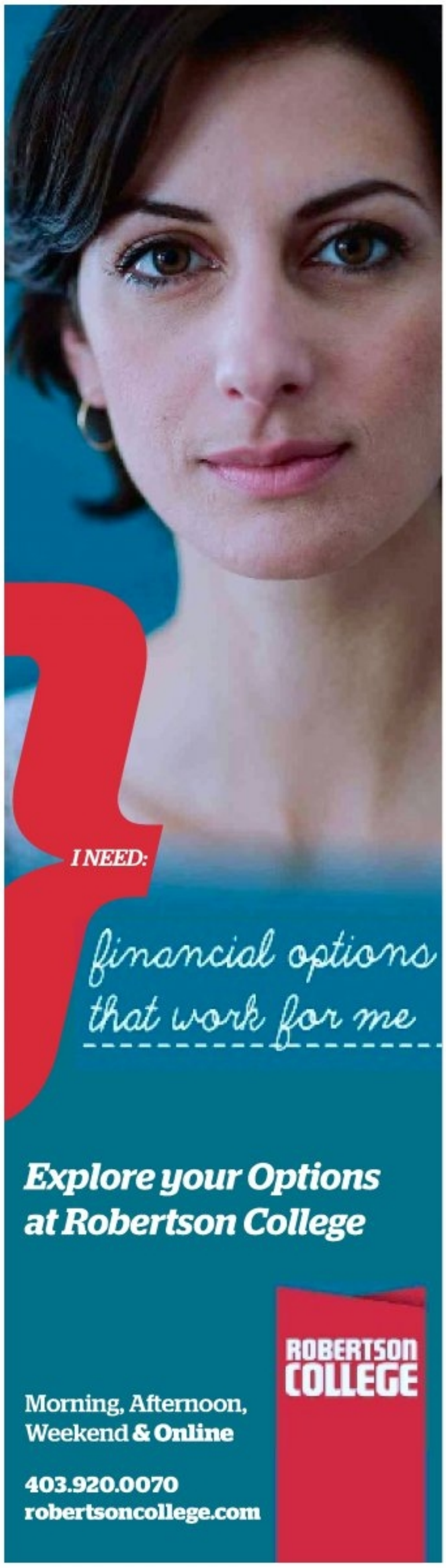
Launched in time for the holidays, the creators are looking forward to seeing what people do with it.

Asked if the feline facial recognition system might have trouble with costumes Mete is confident the app will still work.

"As long as they don't cover the face, if they put a costume on their cat, a hotdog or a unicorn or something, as long as the app can still see the characteristics of their face, it should be fine."

GET SNAPPING

- The app costs $2.79, availbale at candidcatmera.com
- $1 of each app sold goes to the SPCA, whose cats helped test the technology
- If you download it, share your cat selfies with us at scene@metronews.ca



Weaving a basket of festive delights

Adding cream cheese to your cookie dough helps to keep your Christmas cookies softer and lighter in texture with a tangier flavour too. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RECIPE

Nutty cookies forgiving for those without nimble fingers

Chocolatey and nutty with a fairly light texture thanks to the cream cheese, this recipe is adapted from this year's Better Homes and Gardens' Christmas Cookies issue.

They were originally pinwheel shapes but the basket shape that comes from folding all the cookie flaps is also lovely. This shape is also more forgiving for those who don't have nimble fingers.

Cookie tip: Experiment with cream cheese in cookie dough by replacing 1/4 cup of the butter with the same amount of full fat cream cheese to get a softer, lighter texture with a soft tanginess.

Chocolate-Hazelnut Baskets

Makes 32 cookies.

Ingredients:

- 32 whole shelled hazelnuts
- 3/4 cup (185 mL) room temperature unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) softened cream cheese
- 2/3 cup (160 mL) granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) baking powder
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract
- 2 cups (500 mL) all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2/3 cup (160 mL) Nutella, chilled in fridge

Directions:

1. Spread hazelnuts in a shallow baking pan. Bake for 5 to 10 minutes, or until nuts are slightly browned and fragrant, shaking pan halfway to prevent burning. Let cool and rub off skins with paper towel. Set aside.

2. In a stand mixer with a paddle attachment at medium speed or a large bowl with a mixer on medium, beat butter and cream cheese till fluffy, about 30 seconds. Add sugar, baking powder and salt. Mix for another 2 minutes, scraping down sides of bowl. Mix in egg and vanilla until well-incorporated. Divide dough in half.

3. Roll each dough ball into a 10-inch (25 cm) square between sheets of parchment paper on a clean work surface. Cut out 16, 2 1/2-inch (6 cm) squares. Place squares 1-inch (2.5 cm) apart on a lined baking sheet. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

4. With a knife, cut 1-inch (2.5 cm) slits from each corner to centre. Spoon 1/2 teaspoon of Nutella into centre of each cookie. Fold every tip into centre to form a basket shape. Lightly press toasted hazelnut into centre where corners meet.

5. Bake at 350F (175 C) for 10 to 15 minutes or until edges are firm and edges are slightly puffed. Cool for 5 minutes before transferring to wire racks to cool completely.

6. Store in an airtight container for up to a week or freeze for up to a month.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ROSE REISMAN THE SAVVY EATER

THIS WEEK: Christmas caffeine kick

Cozying up with a festive drink can be like eating more than your fair share of dessert!

PICK THIS

Starbucks Grande Holiday Spice Flat White (with 2% milk)

Calories 240
Fat 7g
Saturated Fat 4.5g
Sugar 30g

SKIP THIS

Starbucks Grande Eggnog Latte (with whole milk)

Calories 480
Fat 21g
Saturated Fat 13g
Sugar 52g

HERE'S WHY

Equivalent to five Chapman's Vanilla Frozen Yogurt Bars in fat.

Seasonal beverages are a favourite part of the holidays for many, but beware of drinking your calories and fat. Eggnog is primarily made with whole milk or cream and egg yolks, which is loaded with saturated fats. The Holiday Spice Flat White gives you that festive flavour and feel with about half the calories and sugar, and a fraction of the fat and saturated fat.

LIQUID ASSETS PETER ROCKWELL

Three perfect partners for the big bird

What wine goes with turkey? When you write about booze, you hear that question more than White Christmas at seasonal get-togethers.

Truth be told, the big bird is pretty accommodating when it comes to a liquid partner. The ideal match is actually less about the meat and more about the side dishes which, on December 25th, can be anything from herbaceous and earthy to sweet and tangy.

Here are three perfect, all-purpose pairings.

Moselland 2014 Ars Vitis Riesling ($11.95-$15.99): One for those who like a hint of sweetness. Easy-drinking, and in-law friendly, with its cool window label design this German drinks as good as it looks.

Lindemans 2014 Bin 65 Chardonnay ($10.95-$12.99): Dry and lightly oaked, it's a Down Under white layered with bright tropical fruit and balanced acidity.

Kim Crawford 2015 South Island Pinot Noir ($19.95-$21.99): For the red lovers, a New Zealander that combines ripe, New World flavours with old-school, European sophistication.

From me to you, have a safe and happy holidays.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

FOODIE TRAILS

Growing appetite for gastronomy getaways

There's no better way to soak up the culture of a country than through its food with global gastronomic festivals drawing more foodies eager to combine noshing and sipping while viewing the sights.

"Celebrity chefs and TV programs have played a huge role in gastronomy being a huge motivation for today's travellers," says Timothy Chan of G Adventures, a travel company founded by Bruce Poon Tip in Toronto in 1990. Canadian experts are leading food-centric tours to exotic locales.

Naomi Duguid has spent 25 years researching the cultural and culinary aspects of far-flung countries. Her most recent book, Taste of Persia, chronicles the rich heritage and culinary cross-influences in the region.

"You understand things through the food," says Duguid, who calls a tour she's leading to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand a "combo cooking-food-shopping-eating immersion course."

G Adventures is introducing 2017 trips to a Naples pizza fest, a Belgian beer tour and La Tomatina festival in Valencia, Spain.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

OH BOY BABY JOY FOR FIRST COUPLE OF BOLLYWOOD

Popular Bollywood couple Kareena Kapoor Khan and Saif Ali Khan say they have been blessed with a baby boy. The couple (pictured here at a wedding last year) announced the birth of their son in a Mumbai hospital in a tweet Tuesday. While Taimur Ali Khan Pataudi is the first child of 36-year-old Kareena Kapoor Khan, 46-year-old Saif Ali Khan already has a son and a daughter from a previous marriage. The couple belong to prominent Bollywood families. Kareena Kapoor Khan's father, Randhir Kapoor, grandfather Raj Kapoor and great-grandfather Prithviraj Kapoor were all well-known actors, producers or directors. Saif Ali Khan's mother, Sharmila Tagore, was a popular film actress in the 1970s and '80s. His father, Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, was a former Indian cricket captain.

STRDEL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

GOSSIP

Did Robbie just get married?

Margot Robbie has responded to wedding rumours by giving the finger on Instagram — the ring finger, that is.

The actress posted a picture of a big diamond on her extended ring finger on the photo-sharing platform Monday.

She also appeared to be wearing a white dress in the picture, which shows her kissing a bearded man.

Several British tabloids have reported that the 26-year-old Robbie married director Tom Ackerley over the weekend in her native Australia.

Robbie's representatives didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on the reports from The Associated Press.

Former soap opera star Robbie is best known for her roles in The Wolf of Wall Street and Suicide Squad.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INSTAGRAM

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Stewart's stairway to holiday heaven

THE SHOW: It's a Wonderful Life
THE MOMENT: The staircase embrace

George Bailey (James Stewart) has just returned from seeing how bleak a George-less existence would look. He bursts into his ramshackle house and spies his children at the top of the staircase.

"Kids!" he bellows, and though it's only one word, you would know in the dark that the voice was Jimmy Stewart's. He starts up the steps. The newel post comes off in his hand. That once frustrated him. This time he kisses it.

His long legs take three stairs at a time, so he appears to fly upward. A second later he jogs back down, covered in children, emitting a small, staccato giggle as he goes.

Look, we all know the rap on this movie, which turned 70 yesterday. It was Stewart's first picture after five years away, including 20 months on the Second World War's front lines, and (according to the new book Mission: Jimmy Stewart and the Fight for Europe) he was suffering from PTSD. Many critics see it as a soppy panacea, a coating of treacle to disguise George's — and by extension, our — bitter disappointments.

Yes, but so what? I think most people end up living smaller lives than the ones they dream of. I think we get some of what we want and learn to live without the rest.

George Bailey's iconic staircase embrace. CONTRIBUTED

What matters to me is that every time I hear that "Kids!" followed by that giggle — and I've heard it at least 40 times — my heart thumps. It's one of the trustiest, truest movie moments I know.

It's a Wonderful Life airs Christmas Eve at 8 p.m. on CTV as well as other channels.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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Come see the Christmas magic in Spruce Meadows

CONTRIBUTED

Once again, Spruce Meadows invites everyone to come enjoy the Christmas Season with a quarter of a million light strings, measuring more than 50 kilometres, on display throughout the grounds, in the south of the city.

You can either do the two kilometre drive — entering from the west end along Tournament Lane, the Courtyard, Traffic Circle, the Nations Flag Park, Riders Chapel and the Pond, which, depending on weather, may be suitable for skating. Or you can step out of your car and park before or after (lot #4) to see the displays up close.

They've turned the Hoecker pavilion structures into different internationally themed snow globes, there's a variety of 12-foot statues of Heroic Jim Shore Santa Clauses from around the world, and fire pits scattered throughout. Go into the warm comfort of the Founders Plaza for holiday treats like ginger bread, or enjoy a hot chocolate or coffee together.

The Christmas Lights at Spruce Meadows runs daily from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. until Sunday, Jan. 8 with the exception of Dec. 25. And true to Ron Southern's vision for the Christmas spectacular, it's free.

"He had a vision to make Spruce Meadows a unique place for people to do this — to drive through and enjoy the season," says Ian Allison, senior vice president. "If you weren't mobile enough to get out of your car, there was still something for you to enjoy over the holidays." He adds that this is all made possible because of the generous support of four great corporate partners: Scotiabank, Bennett Jones, ATCO and AKITA Drilling.

The annual Christmas lights spectacular comes after three successful weekends of the International Christmas Market that saw more than 200,000 people attend. Then the venue needed a couple of days to transition for the more than 300 runners who braved the -30-degree temperature to participate in the Dashing Through the Glow Fun Run on Dec. 9, which was when the Christmas lights were fully ignited for the first time this holiday season.

Allison shares, with a laugh, that the Christmas Lights display is so popular that they have to turn them off during the transition from the Christmas Market to discourage people from coming through before it officially starts.

"About a quarter of them are up for the Market, but then we add some more, for a total of about 50 kilometres," Allison says.

This is just one more way that Spruce Meadows makes the holiday season special for Calgarians and visitors.

SPRUCE MEADOWS

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Running throughout the holiday season, Spruce Meadows invites your entire family - together with your Christmas guests - to enjoy the Christmas Lights at Spruce Meadows.

Each evening from 5 -10 pm from December 10, 2016 to January 8, 2017 (excluding Christmas Day, December 25).

Please enter via Tournament Lane.
Visit sprucemeadows.com for more information

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'One Team Spirit' plays a big part at dealership

Stadium Nissan has a solid reputation for keeping customers happy, and that's as true in their parts department as anywhere else.

Andy Heartfield manages that particular department, and proudly admits it's one of the most efficient ones in all of Calgary's dealerships — especially impressive with only two other employees to help run it.

Andy Heartfield, parts manager at Stadium Nissan in Calgary. CONTRIBUTED

Meet the trio

The parts trio at Stadium Nissan is a cohesive unit, firmly in the habit of making decisions as a group. "We all have our hands in the cookie jar," jokes Heartfield, explaining that it's not your typical parts department where people just flip through a catalogue.

Heartfield used to be a technician in the service department at Stadium Nissan, which gives him an edge in understanding how to fix vehicles and the associated parts necessary. He shares this knowledge with his two colleagues: the first is Chris Barros, an auto aficionado who continues to work on cars at home as a hobby and "knows the parts department like the back of his hand," according to Heartfield. The other employee, David Huston, also brings strong parts knowledge thanks to his time working with a trucking company up north.

All three parts employees have the experience, knowledge and keen interest in the automotive industry to make them trustworthy sources of advice when it comes to what parts your vehicle needs.

Bang for your buck

While they specialize in Nissan parts, the team can order parts for any model of vehicle (either direct from the manufacturer or after-market) and have them in within a day or two. The biggest selling items at Stadium Nissan are tires; Heartfield attributes that to the fact that they are priced so aggressively at just $10 above cost, regardless of product or vehicle.

This policy was introduced by the owner and general manager, Andrew Franiel, in hopes of bringing new customers to Stadium Nissan. His philosophy of customer satisfaction shows up throughout the dealership, and the customers keep coming back.

Until Dec. 31, Stadium Nissan customers can buy three tires and get the fourth tire for $1 — choose from four brands including Continental, Hankook, Yokohama and Toyo. The offer is good for all season, all weather or winter tires, in all sizes as approved by any vehicle manufacturers. It's part of the Nissan Tire Advantage, which recognizes that the right tire will provide superb performance and handling for all conditions — such as cold Alberta winters — plus stability, tread life and less roll resistance, which impacts your fuel economy.

Word of mouth

As people gather for the holidays this time of year, word gets out quick about good and bad service experiences. Heartfield explains that most people aren't happy when they go to a dealership for parts, so when they come to Stadium Nissan and are met with honesty and good value, they're encouraged to return — and refer friends and family too. No one works on commission at Stadium Nissan, which makes the experience dramatically different.

Stadium Nissan provides more than just the mechanical parts. Heartfield says they are able to source out anything from inside or outside of your vehicle, such as floor mats; dealers all provide them, but Nissan's custom fit liners are more water tight, providing a better fit and keeping floors drier. And that's just one example of superior product.

Heartfield feels that by giving someone a sincere opinion on car needs, he and his team creates a trust that customers will remember. "Why would you make an extra commission for the day, when you can have them bring their business back to you for service, which can add up to more over the year," he says.

The parts department may be entirely separate from the service department, but they stay true to the company's underlying motto: "One Team Spirit." At Stadium Nissan, everyone is on the same team.

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Strong enough for most jobs

REVIEW

Ridgeline's driving dynamics can't be beat

Stephen Elmer
AutoGuide.com

Towing 5,000 pounds (2,268 kilograms) isn't what it used to be. The weight of steel and wood hasn't changed but the towing capabilities and capacities of the vehicles responsible for moving them sure have.

We have half-ton trucks that can pull about 5,500 kg, heavy-duty pickups that can move almost 14,000 kg and a new crop of midsize trucks that are as capable as last decade's half-tons. For most hauling needs, today's midsize pickup is more than enough, and with Honda's redesigned 2017 Ridgeline, you get a unique proposition in the segment.

Honda rates the Ridgeline to tow 2,268 kg, falling short of the Toyota Tacoma's 3,084-kg max rating and the Chevy Colorado's max rating of 3,493 kg, though in the payload department, the Ridgeline stacks up well. It is the only midsize pickup to use a multi-link independent rear suspension, rather than a leaf spring setup.

Canadian Ridgelines get all-wheel drive as standard equipment.

Spec for spec, Honda's small pickup is about on par with the competition on most fronts, though it is the tow rating that falls short. Even if you're not pulling the limit every time you tow, having that extra capacity means that you're not stressing your truck as much when you pull.

So can the Ridgeline actually pull at its limit with confidence? We hitched up a large four-place snowmobile trailer that weighs in just shy of the Ridgeline's max capacity.

Easily the best part of the towing experience with the Ridgeline is the way the suspension soaks up all the weight with little issue. Despite the rear end squatting, the front wheels didn't feel light and the nose wasn't pointing straight up into the air. Side-to-side movement felt controlled, and even the trailer's weight couldn't push the truck around.

This translates into the cabin with nice, planted steering feel and little to no torque steer thanks in part to the all-wheel drive.

THE CHECKLIST | 2017 HONDA RIDGELINE

THE BASICS

Engine: 3.5L V6
Power: 280 hp and 262 lb-ft of torque
Transmission: Six-speed automatic
Fuel Economy: 12.8 L/100 km city, 9.5 L/100 km highway, 11.3 L/100 km combined
Price: Starts at $36,590 (destination included)

LOVE IT

- Stable dynamics with weight
- Great unladen drive
- Handy features

LEAVE IT

- Lack of integrated trailer brake
- No tow/haul mode
- A little more power would be nice

Ferrari's supercar surprise stunner

LUCID MOTORS AIR

A head-turning debut

The Lucid Motors Air has debuted and it could be a real Tesla killer. Equipped with the largest battery pack in the automotive world, the Lucid Air has an optional 130-kWh battery to deliver an all-electric range of 643 kilometres. The company said a 100-kWh battery is standard but it's unclear what range that model offers.

JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

GOOGLE

Meet Waymo

Alphabet, the parent company of Google, is introducing an all-new brand, Waymo, which will be responsible for the outfit's self-driving cars. The new company will be headed by John Krafcik, the same man who has been in charge of Google's self-driving car arm since 2015. According to Krafcik, the simple aim of Waymo is "to make it safe and easy for people and things to move around."

STEPHEN ELMER/AUTOGUIDE.COM

WHEELS ROUNDUP

News driving the auto industry brought to you by AutoGuide.com

FERRARI

Only 10 J50s will be built

Ferrari made a surprise debut of a new supercar to commemorate the brand's 50th anniversary in Japan.
Only 10 Ferrari J50s will be built, with each unit being bespoke to each customer. The Ferrari J50 is a two-seat, mid-rear-engined roadster that pays homage to the targa top Ferraris of the 1970s and 1980s. The Ferrari J50 starts life as a 488 Spider but gets churned through Ferrari's Special Projects department to become a completely new car. The J50 is powered by a 3.9-litre V8 and gets all-new bodywork that is both very futuristic while still having details that pay homage to the Italian brand's past. The most immediate differences between the Ferrari J50 and the 488 are the new LED headlights, the new carbon fiber air channels in the hood, and a completely new front bumper design.

JODI LAI/AUTOGUIDE.COM

AUTOMATION

Self-driving Uber caught breaking the law

It wasn't even 24 hours since Uber announced its self-driving car is available in San Francisco when it was caught on camera running a red light. Using Volvo XC90 SUVs and working with the Swedish automaker, Uber has launched a self-driving pilot in San Francisco. And within the first day of the announcement, at least one person has tweeted about seeing the self-driving Uber nearly hitting a car, while another person has posted a video showing the XC90 running a red light through an intersection with a pedestrian trying to cross the street.

JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

IN BRIEF

VW Microbus might return as an EV

Details about the second vehicle in Volkswagen's upcoming fleet of battery electric vehicles are slowly taking shape, and it looks like it will be a seven-passenger van based on the company's historic microbus. The second electric vehicle — call it the Electric Type 2, for simplicity's sake— will share the MEB platform that underpins VW's ID concept. That concept, which premiered at the Paris Auto Show, is the first car confirmed for the MEB platform. Like the ID, the Electric Type 2, will power the rear wheels from an engine placed between those same wheels.

SEBASTIEN BELL/AUTOGUIDE.COM

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Hartley finds work in coaching Latvia

HOCKEY

12th-ranked team hires former Flames bench boss

Bob Hartley has been named head coach of the Latvian men's hockey team.

He was most recently the head coach of the NHL's Calgary Flames, who fired Hartley on May 3 and later replaced him with Glen Gulutzan.

Hartley, 56, will be the second NHL coach to stand behind Latvia's bench after Ted Nolan from 2011 to 2014.

Hartley's contract is for one year with an option for a second, the Latvian Ice Hockey Federation said on its website.

The Hawkesbury, Ont., native coached the Colorado Avalanche to a Stanley Cup in 2001 and also coached the Atlanta Thrashers from 2003 to 2007.

He won the Jack Adams Award as the NHL's coach of the year in 2015 after coaching the Flames to a 45-30-7 record and into the second round of playoffs.

But Calgary backslid 20 points in 2015-16 and Hartley was sacked.

He's coached in Europe before. Hartley spent the 2011-12 season with the Zurich Lions in Switzerland before he was hired by the Flames.

Bob Hartley, second from left, spent four seasons coaching the Flames and won the Jack Adams Award in 2015. JANA CHYTILOVA/FREESTYLE PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES

The Latvian men are currently ranked No. 12 in the world by the International Ice Hockey Federation.

Latvia fell a win short of getting into the 2018 Winter Olympics when they lost to Germany in a qualification tournament final in September.

"It will be my first experience working with a national team and I'm grateful to the Latvian Hockey Federation for giving me the opportunity and confidence," Hartley said in a statement.

"I'm looking forward to the moment when the Latvian national team will start its preparation, which will be the foundation of a successful start at the world championship."

294

Hartley was the head coach of the Flames for 294 games (134-135-25).

Hartley will be scouting the world junior hockey championship in Toronto and Montreal starting Dec. 26, the Latvian federation said.

The 2017 men's world championship May 5-21 will be held in Cologne, Germany, and Paris. Latvia is in a group with Russia, the United States, Sweden, Slovakia, Germany, Denmark and Italy.

Canada, winner of back-to-back world titles, is in a pool with Finland, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Belarus, Norway, France and Slovenia.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Go to metronews.ca for coverage of Tuesday night's Flames-Sharks game.

TENNIS

Kvitova injured in attack with knife

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova was injured by a knife-wielding attacker at her home on Tuesday and had to undergo surgery on her left hand.

An operation that took three hours and 45 minutes revealed that the left-handed player's injuries were "serious," but "there's no reason to think she wouldn't be able to play tennis," her spokesman Karel Tejkal said.

Kvitova will, however, miss the Australian Open and a significant part of the season as she won't be able to fully train for at least three months, Tejkal said.

Kvitova sustained damaged to the tendons in her left hand, along with injuries to all five fingers and two nerves, added Tejkal, who described the incident as a burglary.

The 2011 and 2014 champion at the All England Club said she considered herself lucky to have survived the attack Tuesday morning in the eastern Czech town of Prostejov.

Petra Kvitova GETTY IMAGES

"In my attempt to defend myself, I was badly injured on my left hand. I am shaken, but fortunate to be alive," Kvitova wrote on Twitter.

"The injury is severe and I will need to see specialists, but if you know anything about me I am strong and I will fight this."

Police spokesman Frantisek Korinek said the male attacker escaped from the scene and was at large. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Hernandez denied a delay to double-murder trial

Former New England Patriots star Aaron Hernandez has lost his bid to delay his trial in the 2012 killing of two men in Boston.

Prosecutors say a Suffolk Superior Court judge on Tuesday denied a request by Hernandez's lawyer to delay the trial slated to start Feb. 13.

Hernandez is already serving a life sentence for the 2013 killing of Odin Lloyd. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BoSox deal Buchholz to Phils

The Boston Red Sox have traded right-hander Clay Buchholz to the Philadelphia Phillies for minor-league second baseman Josh Tobias.

Buchholz was the odd man out in a Boston rotation that added Chris Sale this off-season.

Buchholz, 32, is a two-time all-star but has been inconsistent through his career. He is 81-61 with a 3.96 ERA in 10 big-league seasons. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ryan keeps Falcons soaring

Matt Ryan has the Atlanta Falcons flying high on their way to the playoffs. The team leads the NFL in scoring, and recently shattered the club's single-season scoring record — now 469 points — despite an injury to star wide receiver Julio Jones. KEVIN C. COX/GETTY IMAGES

NFL

Atlanta's high scoring offence rolls on despite injury to Jones

The Atlanta Falcons can afford to be patient with Julio Jones' return from a sprained toe.

After all, there's no need to rush Jones' recovery after Atlanta topped 40 points in two straight lopsided wins without the star wide receiver.

These are heady times for the Falcons' offence, which already has obliterated the team's single-season scoring record with two games remaining in the regular season. The Falcons play at Carolina on Saturday.

Atlanta is the NFL's top-scoring team, and the race isn't even close. The Falcons (9-5) have 469 points, 63 more than the second-place Saints' 406.

Atlanta's players aren't saying much about the scoring record. They're focused on the more important race for the NFC South title. Atlanta is one game ahead of Tampa Bay in the division.

"If we have to score three points or we have to score a lot of points, we just want to do our part in winning," right guard Chris Chester said Tuesday.

Jones watched from the sideline as the Falcons beat San Francisco 41-13 on Sunday to shatter the mark of 442 points set by the 1998 Super Bowl team. He also missed the previous week's 42-14 win at the Rams.

> **"If one guy goes down another guy steps in and we don't miss a beat.**
> Justin Hardy

The Falcons' success has placed quarterback Matt Ryan in the MVP discussion. He has 32 touchdowns passes with only seven interceptions.

"For me, he's my MVP," running back Devonta Freeman said Tuesday.

Ryan has consistently distributed his passes to a large number of targets. Depth at receiver helped keep the offence moving even without Jones.

Aldrick Robinson led the team with a personal-best 111 yards receiving on four catches against the 49ers. Taylor Gabriel added three catches for 60 yards, including his team-leading sixth touchdown reception.

"It shows the depth that we have by having each other's back," said receiver Justin Hardy. "If one guy goes down, another guy steps in and we don't miss a beat. It says a lot about the team and the character we have."

The Falcons also have good depth at running back with Freeman, who ran for three touchdowns against the 49ers, and Tevin Coleman sharing the carries.

"I think definitely this year it has been fun to see so many people step up and make big plays and that's been a really exciting part of our offence," said centre Alex Mack. "It's not just one guy having a great season. It's a lot of guys doing a lot of good things all over the field a lot of times."

Jones ran routes at the start of practice on Tuesday and is expected to give the toe a full-speed test on Wednesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Raptors offence too much for Nets despite DeRozan's off night

Kyle Lowry scored 23 points to lift Toronto to a 116-104 win over the Brooklyn Nets on Monday, the Raptors' 12 victory in their last 14 appearances.

DeMar DeRozan, who was coming off Eastern Conference player of the week honours and leads the East in scoring, managed just 15 points on 6-for-20 shooting for Toronto (20-8).

But his teammates made up for his off night, as Norman Powell scored a season-high 21 points, DeMarre Carroll had 17, Jonas Valanciunas grabbed a game-high 14 rebounds to go with 10 points and Cory Joseph chipped in with 11 points as the Raptors roared to their 15th consecutive game with 100-plus points.

Rondae Hollis-Hefferson had 19 points to top the Nets (7-20), who played without starting centre Brook Lopez — he took the night off for rest.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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IN BRIEF

Sports community pays tribute to colourful Sager

Longtime TNT broadcaster Craig Sager was remembered for his love of family, sports and colourful attire at a memorial service Tuesday that produced laughs and tears.

Among those attending the service were San Antonio Spurs coach Gregg Popovich and members of Sager's Turner Sports TV family, including Ernie Johnson and Reggie Miller.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Abrams steps down as Alouettes assistant GM

Joey Abrams stepped down Tuesday as the Montreal Alouettes assistant general manager. Abrams spend 12 seasons with the Alouettes, the last year as assistant to former GM Jim Popp. His decision to leave comes after Montreal promoted Kavis Reed, an assistant coach the last two years, to the general manager's position. Reed is reportedly considering Joe Mack to be his assistant.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

England continues losing ways at cricket in India

England's losing tour of India ended in further failure on Tuesday when the tourists collapsed to an innings and 75-run loss in the fifth test in Chennai. Well placed at 167-4 going into the final session and playing for an honourable draw, England lost six wickets for 40 runs to lose the five-match series 4-0. India dominated throughout the series, with effective spin bowling while its batsmen exerted complete domination over England's spinners.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Jazzed-up Tuna Melt

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

You can prep the addictive ingredients of this jazzed-up tuna melt in the time it takes your oven to pre-heat.

Ready in 10 minutes
Prep time: 10 minutes
Serves 2

Ingredients
- 2 whole wheat pita breads
- 1 can tuna
- 1/3 cup diced Granny Smith apple
- 1/3 cup diced celery
- 1/8 cup diced cornichon or dill pickle
- 1 Tbsp mayonnaise
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup grated cheddar

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

2. In a large bowl, mix together the tuna, apple celery, pickle and mayo until it is well combined. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Spread mixture across pitas. Leave a small border around edge the way you do with pizza — it makes it easier to pick up and eat.

4. Sprinkle the cheese evenly across both pitas. Place the pitas on a baking sheet.

5. Pop in the hot oven for about 10 minutes until the cheese is completely melted and the edges of the pitas are toasty brown.

6. Remove from oven and cool for a couple of minutes before cutting each pita into quarters.

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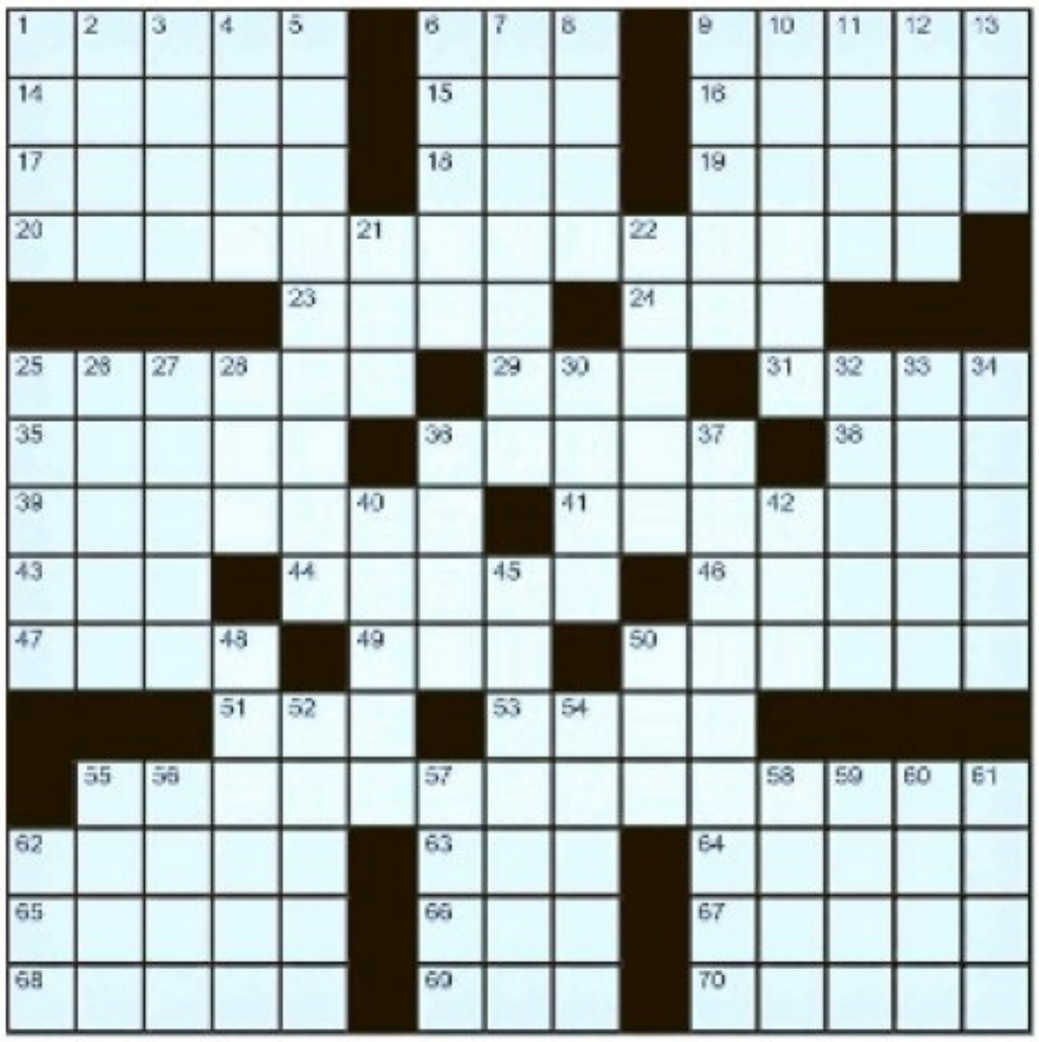
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Abu _ (United Arab Emirates capital)
6. Perform on Broadway
9. Wharfs
14. Keepsake of yore
15. Oslo's li'l locale
16. Remove a toque
17. Alvin _ American Dance Theater
18. Universal principle
19. Turkey treatment
20. Christmas meal condiment: 2 wds.
23. Some deer
24. Howdys
25. Does better than F
29. Christmas _
31. Christmas servings
35. Ancient seaport of Rome
36. Pew user's supports
38. Opening
39. Ghost of Christmas Past, for one
41. Vexing
43. Commandments number
44. Every 60 minutes
46. Ancient column style
47. Winter hill surface
49. _-Margret
50. Musical compositions
51. Daily time segments, briefly
53. Racing's 'Romeo'
55. Popular buys during the festive season: 3 wds.
62. Soil fertilizers
63. Globe
64. Blue _ (Canadian band)
65. Ram's sign
66. Long-snouted fish
67. _ days
68. Rene Descartes: "Je _, donc je suis." (I think, therefore I am)
69. "I _ _ Rock" by Simon & Garfunkel
70. Rug-making apparatuses
21. Greek dawn goddess
22. _ hosiery
25. Stations
26. Tree beavers like
27. Shorthand, for short
28. As written
30. Wedding dress extra
32. Contests of ancient Greece
33. Ms. Van Doren
34. Eyeglasses, fun-style
36. Musicals composer Jerome
37. CSP = Canadian _ _ (Rescue/first aid service on Winter mountains)
40. _ turkey
42. Old French coin
45. 'Noel' as Leon ...or... 'Tinsel' as Silent
48. Narwhals and Bowheads
50. Switch selection
52. Russian, in the French language
54. Astrology sign
55. Plain
56. Ireland, to a poet
57. _ pants (Casual/fitness wear)
58. Alone
59. Produce Department selection
60. Abound
61. Some of "The Brady Bunch"
62. Blueprint

DOWN
1. Bram Stoker's li'l vampire
2. Prince Charles, for one
3. Teatro _ Scala (Milan opera house)
4. "Tres _!"
5. Visible sign from the stepping-outside-person that it's really cold out there: 2 wds.
6. Cavern
7. Become rough
8. Brad Pitt's ancient film
9. Persian Gulf emirate
10. Forward-moving surge
11. Swanky
12. "Citizen _" (1941)
13. Sault _, Marie, Ontario

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
For the next month, the Sun is at the top of your chart, shining a flattering light on you. This makes you look great in the eyes of bosses, parents and VIPs. Yay!

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Do whatever you can to get out of town and experience a change of scenery during the next month, because you need this! You're eager for stimulation and new experiences.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You will be intense about everything in the next four weeks. However, this is a good time to wrap up loose ends with inheritances, taxes and shared property.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Partnerships and friendships are on your mind for the next month. Many of you will run into ex-partners at this time.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Your efficiency at work might suffer now because of Mercury retrograde. Nevertheless, you will do your best to be on top of your game during the next four weeks.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
During the month ahead, you'll want to play! Vacations, romantic escapes, sports events, the arts and playful times with children will be tops on your list.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Home, family and your private life will demand your attention during the next four weeks. Many of you are in contact with relatives whom you haven't seen in a while.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
The pace of your days in the month ahead will accelerate — there's no question about it. Life will be busy with short trips and errands, plus increased reading, writing and studying.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The pace of your days will accelerate during the next four weeks, because you will be busy with short trips and many errands. Gear up for this busier schedule.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The Sun will be in your sign for the next four weeks, energizing you in a wonderful way. This will attract people to you, especially people from your past!

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is a lovely time for you to buy wardrobe items. It's also a great time to do research of any kind. Make plans behind the scenes for your coming year ahead.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Enjoy increased popularity with others in the next four weeks. People want to see you and be part of your world. (It's nice to be loved.)

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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		3	7					
	2							5
	8		9		3			4
4								3
9			5		8		2	
6							8	
					2	1		
		9	4	5				

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4	6	5	8	3	9	2	7	1
6	2	1	3	5	4	8	9	7
5	3	7	9	8	6	4	1	2
9	8	4	2	1	7	5	6	3
3	4	9	1	7	8	6	2	5
1	5	8	6	2	3	7	4	9
2	7	6	4	9	5	1	3	8

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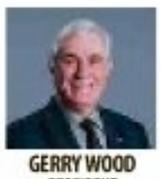

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